



Songs from
the
OZARKS
And Other poems

J. M. HICKMAN



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SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

By J. M. HICKMAN

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By J. M. HICKMAN

Earle, Arkansas

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

AND OTHER POEMS

By
J. M. HICKMAN



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DEDICATION

To my friends at Earle, Arkansas, this little volume
is lovingly dedicated by the Author.

J. M. HICKMAN.



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THE AUTHOR



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SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHAT THE CRITIC SAID

Your verses are not culture-wrought,
Is what the critic said;
Though many are quite full of thought
And will be oft re-read.

The grammar seems to be all right
And all the meter true;
Sometimes you reach to lofty height—
Again, you sink with blue.

Sometimes with hope you take your flight
And sing a happy strain,
And then, cast down in darkest night,
Seem full of grief and pain.

Sometimes with God you seem to dwell
And climb the mountain's side;
And then, like demon from old hell,
You seek from Him to hide.

Sometimes your heart seems beauty's home,
And flowers seem to bloom;
And then, like wayward child to roam,
Seems full of dismal gloom.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Sometimes you seem all full of doubt
And cast the Christ aside;
Again, with joy you sing and shout,
And with Him close abide.

Oh, man! What's weaving in your brain
To call forth all of this?
Have you lived both a life of pain
And then a life of bliss?

Does old remorse, in looking back,
Call forth the anguished cry,
And wring your soul with torture's rack,
That you so moan and sigh?

Let future life with faith attain
Forgiveness for the past,
For God is able to sustain,
And then your joy will last.

REPLY TO THE CRITIC

I care not how the poets wrote,
Nor for the rules they had;
I sing the songs of my own note,
Let them be good or bad.

I sing not for the lord or squire—
For them I do not tone
The muse's harp strings, but my lyre
Is for the poor alone.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Let others copy all they please
The poets of the past;
I'll bend to them no humble knees,
Though my songs may not last.

At least the songs will be my own,
That from my heart were born;
And as I do not seek renown,
I do not fear their scorn.

If but the poor and humble sing
A single song of mine,
That to them happiness will bring,
I'll say the pay's divine.

If gathered 'round their hearth at night
All grieved and full of care,
One song of mine would make them light,
T'will be good pay, I swear.

If humble hearts in after years
Should say his heart was love—
He helped to wipe away our tears,
T'would give me joy above.

Then others may sing as they will
To educated ears,
I'll raise my voice in humble trill
To wipe away poor tears.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

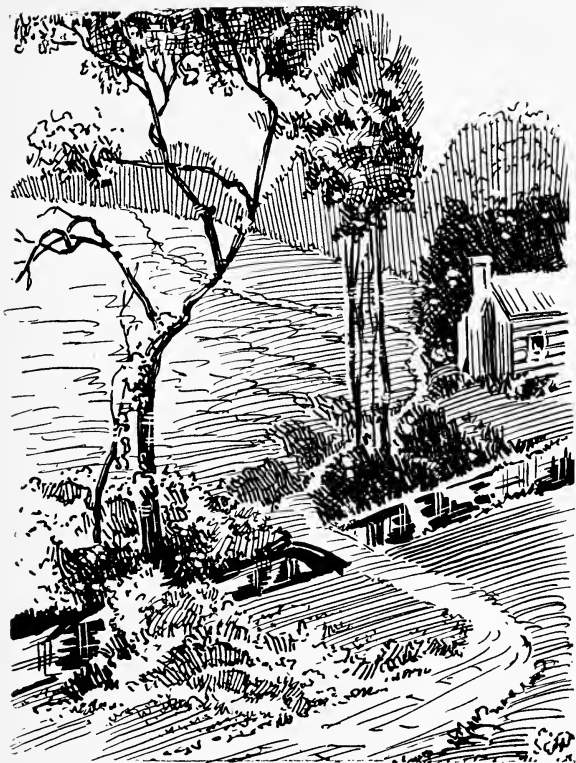
PROLOGUE

I come, untrammelled by man's art,
And sing without a guiding chart;
Uncultured though the songs may be,
They're caught from nature's melody.
In nature, I have heard the song
Of happy creatures all day long,
Who live in peace, without a greed,
Contented with their daily need.

I've always loved the woods and streams—
Have always, in my youthful dreams,
Built rustic cabin in some nook,
And there, with nature for my book,
Away from all the mad'ning strife,
Serenely pass this earthly life,
Without a thought of wealth or creed,
Content with just my daily need.

I've seen leaves turning sere and brown,
With streaks of red and gold to crown;
I've seen them floating down the streams
Like fairies in sweet childhood dreams.
I've caught the sound of swaying breeze
A-rustling through the top of trees;
I've listened, and I've caught the fall
Of leaves that dropped to autumn's call.

I would not swap the mocking bird
For any music that I've heard,
Though Wagner'd be at organ grand,
Accompanied by Sousa's band;



“I’ve always loved the woods and streams—
Have always, in my youthful dreams,
Built rustic cabin in some nook.”

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The warbling of his wild, sweet note,
Born in his heav'nly music throat,
Just makes the very soul aspire
To join the angels in God's choir.

I would not swap the twilight hour
For all the city's 'lectric power;
I would not give old nature's green
For any city park I've seen.
I would not give the moon's soft rays
For any of their great white ways;
I'd rather sleep on beds of moss,
Than on a velvet mattress toss.

I sing the song of woods and streams,
Of starlight nights and pale moonbeams,
Of mossy dells and vine-clad nooks,
And rippling, dripping, gladsome brooks.
I sing of reed and rush and brush,
Of clustered fern, with a green flush;
Of graceful boughs and dark green leaves,
And trailing vine that interweaves.

I sing just as I see and hear,
The songs of nature, ever dear;
The sounds I hear beneath the trees—
Of swelling buds and busy bees.
I sing the song of hill and vale,
Of mocking bird, and thrush, and quail;
Of little wren and oriole,
Of chipmunk, and the velvet mole.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I sing of winds that softly blow,
Of evening sunset's golden glow;
Of azure skies with tinted hue,
And morning glories freshed with dew.
I sing, untrammelled by man's art,
The songs of dear old nature's heart,
The songs of winds and woods and streams,
And starlight nights, and pale moonbeams.

EYES OF BLUE

I love the woods—indeed I do—
I love the hills and vales;
I love the violets so blue,
And flowers in the dales.

I love the honeysuckle, too,
And dogwood, all in bloom;
I love sweet blossoms freshed with dew,
And reeds and rush in plume.

I love the leaves that fall from trees,
I love the greenwood brush,
I love to lie in silent ease
Amidst old nature's hush.

I love the wren, the sparrow, too,
The little thrush and quail;
I love the birds of red and blue,
And mocking birds I hail.



"A saucy, teasing blue-eyed girl,
Who says she loves me, too."

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I love the lark, the whippoorwill,
The jaybird and the dove;
I love the gentle flowing rill—
They lift my thoughts above.

But, best of all, I love a girl—
A girl with eyes of blue;
A saucy, teasing blue-eyed girl,
Who says she loves me, too.

A PICTURE ON A CALENDAR

A mountain reaching to the skies,
A valley spread to view;
A cabin on a gentle rise,
And clouds o'erhead of blue;
The cattle wading in the stream,
The sunset in the west;
A picture lovely as a dream,
That lulls you to sweet rest.

'TIS A BONNY LAND

'Tis a bonny land of ours,
Where the pinks and daisies grow,
And full many lovely flowers,
With a blushing beauty blow;
And the birds forever singing
With a melody so sweet,
That the soul with rapture winging,
Keeps true measure with each beat.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

There are mossy dells and bowers,
Where the lassies love to go;
And the sunset's golden showers
Fills the western sky with glow.
And the trees and vines and creepers,
With a lovely, verdant green,
Mingled with the voice of reapers,
Adds a cadence to the scene.

There are hills and verdant valleys,
There are lofty mountain heights,
Where the footstep ever dallies,
For the soul in them delights.
There are crystal streams of water,
There are pearly azure skies,
And you linger and you loiter,
While your heart emits sweet sighs.

Oh, there never was another
Like our own sweet Southern land;
For the angels are its mother
And its beauty doth expand.
With its many buds and blossoms,
Which in balmy breezes blow,
It just fills all hearts and bosoms
With the beauty of its glow.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

BLUE BIRDS

An ardent little lover
Flew to an apple tree,
Where a demure little maiden
Was singing cheerily.

Said the ardent little lover,
"To-whit, to-whit, to-whee,"
Said the demure little maiden,
"Do you mean that, sir, for me?"

Said the ardent little lover,
"To-whit, to-whit, to-whee,
Means, demure little maiden,
Will you my sweetheart be?"

Said the demure little maiden
That sang so cheerily,
"What have you, sir, to offer,
As an inducement to me?"

Said the ardent little lover,
"To-whit, to-whit. to-whee!
I've a pleasant little bower
Upon a cherry tree."

Then the demure little maiden
Just hung her head and sighed,
And spread her tiny little wings
And floated by his side.

BLUE-EYED GIRLS

I love the merry, blue-eyed girl,
With dimples on her chin,
And many a sunny, flashing curl,
And mouth just made to grin.
The girl who frankly looks at you,
With courage true and straight,
Bespeaking nature good and true,
Without envy or hate.

The girl who's not afraid to be
Just plain girl, every day;
Who's always singing cheerily,
At work, or at her play.
The girl who smiles on every one,
At home or on the street,
Yet full of mischief, full of fun—
Oh, such a girl's a treat.

The healthy freckled girl, you know,
With sunshine in her face,
Who loves to tease dear father so,
When he's about the place.
The girl who romps and plays tomboy,
When brother is at home,
With heart just full of sunny joy,
And cheeks like Southern gloam.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

THE SOUTHLAND

Oh, land of sweet dreams
Where balmy winds blow,
And clear rippling streams
Of cool waters flow,
With ripple and splash
And many a dash
Against the green bank
Where nature grows rank—
I love thy green vales,
Thy glens and thy dells,
Where nature prevails
And godliness dwells.

Oh, land of the rose,
Magnolia and pine,
Where sweet ozone blows
'Midst tangle and vine,
And violets blue,
With heavenly hue
Peep up from the soil,
Where nature doth toil—
I love every breeze,
Each beam of sunshine,
The swaying of trees—
The music divine.

Oh, land of wee rills
And clear running brooks,
Where mocking bird trills
Amidst shady nooks,

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And thrush, wren and quail
With songs do regale
Full many an hour
Beneath shady bower—
I love every scene,
Each twig and each flow'r
In old nature green,
That upward doth tow'r.

Oh, land of my youth,
That ever doth seem
A sunland of truth,
A sweet fairy dream,
Where lovely maids blush
With roseate flush
That melts with its glow
Like delicate snow—
My heart ever beats
With a love that's divine
Amidst thy retreats—
Oh, land of sunshine!

BUT FEW KNOW

But few know who or what is God—
Most bow themselves beneath a rod
Of priestly craft and man-made creed
That falls far short of their real need.

The best we make of life on earth
Is, render to all men their worth;
Be honest, fair, and truly square—
'Twill make a heaven anywhere.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

THE MURMUR OF THE WATERS

Oh, the murmur of the water
As it gently flows along,
Is the sweetest of all music,
Singing soft its low sweet song.
Oh, the harmony, all joining
With the gentle zephyr's breeze,
And the melody of birds that
Sing in top of swaying trees.

Oh, I love to hear the music
As it ripples near the bank
And refreshes all the willows
There, so green and tall and rank.
Oh, it 'minds me of sweet heaven,
Where the waters murmur low,
As I lie full length upon the
Bank, and watch the sunset glow.

Oh, my thoughts go drifting outward
With the pleasant flowing tide,
And I dream of heav'nly mansion,
Where at last I shall abide.
Oh, it lifts my soul in rapture
As it murmurs soft and clear,
And my heart it seems to capture
With a melody of cheer.

Oh, the glinting of the evening's
Sun upon the waters shine,
With a tinting of the rainbow's
Hues, that seems almost divine.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, I drink refreshing nectar
From its bosom of pure gold,
And I bathe in gleams of glory,
With a joy that can't be told.

Oh, there never was such music
As the waters sweet and low,
Like the chiming of a distant
Bell, as on they gently flow.
Oh, it lifts your thoughts to heaven
And your soul it seems to rest,
As the waters sing in harmony
With the sunset in the west.

WHY DO WE CLING?

Why do we cling to mortal life,
And every day repeat
The same old daily struggling strife,
With others to compete?
We wake at morn and tasks begin,
Where ended day before—
With earnest hope of heart to win
Great wealth to lay in store.

Sometimes we weep, sometimes we smile,
Sometimes we dance and sing;
Sometimes we sleep and rest awhile
And dream eternal spring.
Yet as each morning dawn appears
We face the same old strife;
Again the struggling and the tears
Of this old mortal life.

WHEN THE HEART IS GENTLY THROBBING

When your heart is gently throbbing
With a love for fellow man,
And your soul is yearning strongly
Just to help one, if you can—
Oh, the days, they just seem brighter
As you journey long life's road,
And your burdens all seem lighter—
For love lightens all the load.

When your heart with love expanding
Stretches forth a helping hand,
To some fellow who is stranding
On an isle of sinking sand,
You will feel a stir within you
That will fill you with delight,
And his glance of adoration
Will be a pleasant sight.

Oh, the joy of helping onward
Some poor fellow full of care—
Some poor, hopeless, struggling fellow,
Almost full of dark despair,
Just to make hope seem some brighter,
Just to cheer him on his way;
Just to make his burdens lighter,
Just his fearsome thoughts allay.

Ah, 'twill fill your heart with gladness,
Make your burden light to bear—
It will drive away all sadness,
Make you welcome everywhere;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And when twilight draws about you
In the evening of your life,
Throngs of friends will gather 'round you
As you leave this worldly strife.

WHEN LAST I LAY ME DOWN

When last I lay me down to sleep
Until the break of day,
I wish not for my friends to weep
O'er my poor frame of clay.

I merely wish to rest in peace
Amongst the silent dead,
Where earthly troubles all will cease,
And flowers overspread.

A plain white stone to mark the place
Where I am to be found,
My name, just traced upon its face,
Then—silence all around.

Then, when your heart is troubled, friend,
Just come to my green mound,
And with my spirit silent blend,
'Midst solitude profound.

THE BOY WHO WHISTLES

I love a boy who whistles
With a merry face, and gay—
Who cares naught for the thistles
That one meets with every day;
A boy that's always merry,
Just full of prank and play—
Whose face is ever cheery,
Like the blushing month of May.

Who does not fear the sunshine,
Nor the freckles on his face;
Who climbs the tangled grape vine,
With a squirrel's nimble grace.
Who loves the hills and mountains,
And is ever near the place
Where flows old nature's fountains,
In a silv'ry splashing race.

Who loves the cooling water
In the sunny month of June,
Where footsteps ever loiter,
For he hates to leave so soon.
The streams are ever smiling
And he is always in tune,
With puckered lips beguiling—
He is whistling morn and noon.

I love the careless free heart
Of the barefoot freckled boy,
The boy who takes his own part
In this world of grief and joy;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The boy that's ever beaming
With a smile that doth decoy,
And sunny face all gleaming
From a heart that's full of joy.

LET ME PILLOW MY HEAD

Let me pillow my head where the moonbeams will spread
All of their soft, sweet glow—
With the trees overhead, and the earth for my bed,
Where zephyrs softly blow.

Let me dream a sweet dream, while its soft milky stream
Cast shadows all around.
Catch the beauties that beam from each soft chastened
gleam,
'Midst solitude profound.

Let me drift with each wave, like a worn wearied slave
Who has found balm at last;
Let me rest in its rays 'neath the magnolia bays,
Forgetting all the past.

Let me bathe in the stream of its soft milky cream,
While the shadows come and go;
Let me drink in each beam of the glimmering gleam,
That I may softly glow.

Let me feel a release, of life's troubles a surcease,
And sink unto my rest;
Let me sleep in sweet peace, while the soft rays increase,
To light me to the blest.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

PERHAPS ABOVE

Perhaps above—unknown to us below—
Those whom we love, to God do daily go,
And kneeling there, before the heavenly throne,
Plead with sweet prayer, that mercy may be shown.

Perhaps unknown, they come to us in dreams,
And in soft tone, like gentle flowing streams,
Whisper a song so full of hope's sweet cheer
It makes us strong, and drives away all fear.

Perhaps—who knows? God sends them, when despair
Our heart overflows, to lighten all our care?
He knows our frame, that we are naught but dust,
Helpless in sin and shame. We can but trust.

Perhaps for this, He sends them to us here,
To fill with bliss and sinking spirits cheer.
For God doth know we need encouragement—
Like the rainbow to men of old, was sent.

Perhaps it may that in God's wisdom way,
Just to allay our fearsome thoughts each day,
He lets them come to hover 'bout our bed,
And comfort's crumb, o'er all our troubles spread.

Perhaps—but, nay, I will not further write,
For every day we see God's love and might;
Let us but trust in love and confidence,
For great and just is His benevolence.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHEN I DIE

When I die, lay me away
Where sweet flower leaves will spray
All their sweetness on my head,
Making fair my cold, damp bed.

Border all around my grave
Every flower that I crave;
Give to each one proper care—
Make the spot to blossom fair.

Cover, then, the mound with green,
Adding to the pleasant scene;
Come, then, sit where beauty's rife
And dream of immortal life.

YOU ASK ME WHY?

You ask me why I waste my time
In singing songs, in verse and rhyme?
I hear old nature sweetly sing
A song, that makes the welkin ring.
The buds and blossoms swelling there
With fragrance sweet that fills the air,
Have voices full of melody
That somehow fills me with their glee.

My heart responsive, full of love,
In gratitude to God above,
Just overflows without restraint
And tries in feeble words to paint

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The glories of creation here,
Upon this dear old hemisphere,
And like a mocking bird repeat
The songs I hear in nature sweet.

I never cross a hill or dale
But what old nature has a tale
To tell me, of some new-born thing,
Whose beauty cause a song to spring
Up in my heart, and I would fain
Tell it to all in rhythmic strain,
That they might upward lifted be,
Love God and nature, just like me.

It matters not the time of year—
Old nature's to me ever dear;
Though leaves are gone, and trees are bare,
She still has many beauties rare,
And there is music in the sound
Of dead leaves rustling on the ground;
And even in those leaves you see
A trace that's left of spring's beauty.

Each creature has prepared before
For what old nature had in store,
And snug they are, in nest or hole—
Be it a squirrel, fox or mole,
And there in happy comfort stay
Until cold winter's passed away.
At peep of spring they venture out
And scamper joyfully about.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Each has a note of gratitude,
Though to your ear it might sound rude,
Yet each one's note, though it sounds odd,
Just reaches to the ear of God.
He bends and listens to each note,
Though coming from a muffled throat—
Reciprocates to each one's call,
Just as He heeds the sparrow's fall.

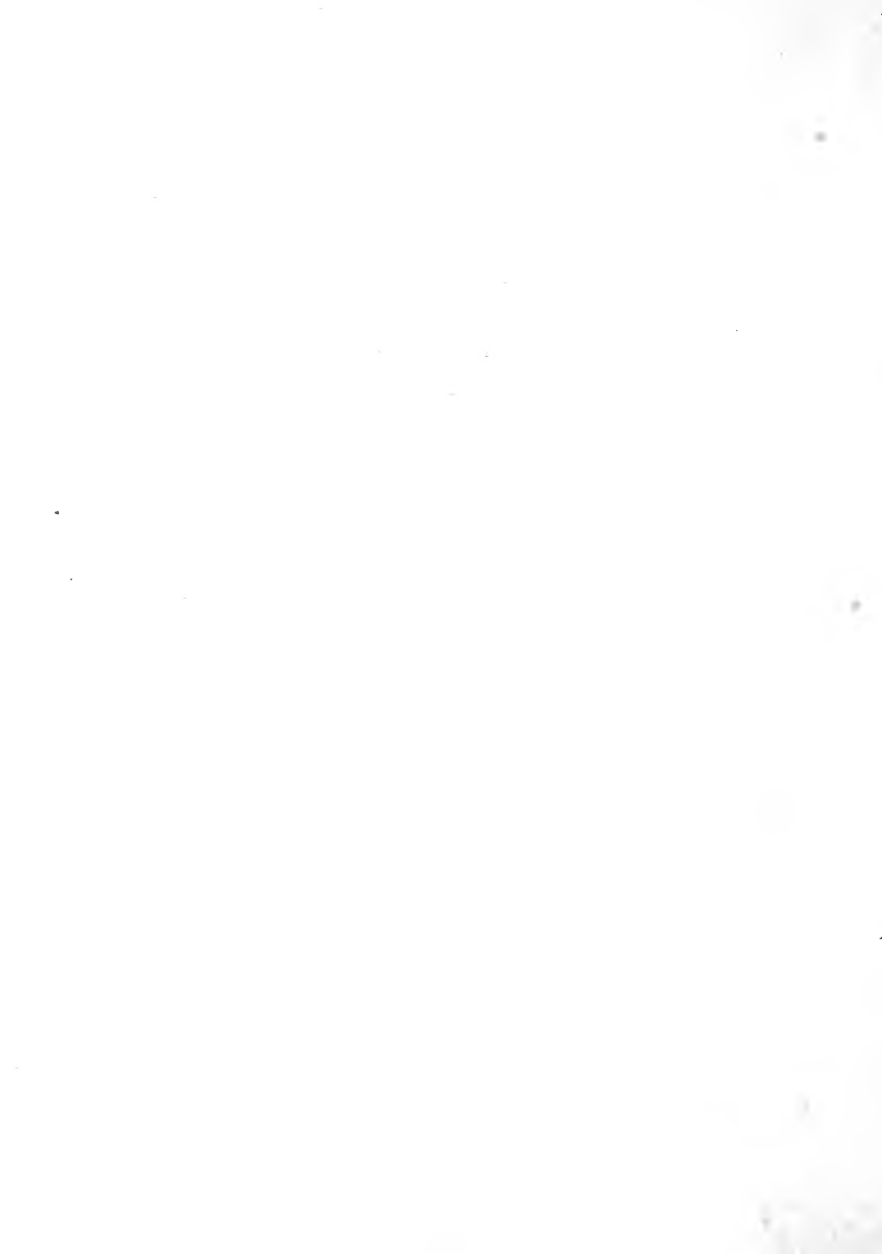
In spring, when everything is green,
The swelling buds and flowers are seen;
The birds, all mating here and there,
With love's sweet song, float in the air.
They build their nests on bough and limb,
'Midst noisy life they raise a hymn;
I'd rather hear the song birds sing
Than be a nation's pampered king.

Then can you ask me why my time
Is often spent in verse and rhyme?
Great God! Deliver me from wealth,
So often gained by wrongs and stealth,
By men garbed in religion's cloak,
Who sit in the church pews and croak,
And sing, and pray, with pious air,
While all the time a devil's there!

Who possibly the day before
Put some poor widow out of door,
With little children in bare feet,
To wander homeless in the street!



"For 'mongst the woods and limpid streams
Your heart is filled with wond'rous dreams."



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I'd rather live 'mongst nature's haunts
Than gilded halls of wealth and vaunts,
And eat the nuts and fruits found there,
Than fill such poor hearts with despair.

For 'mongst the woods and limpid streams
Your heart is filled with wondrous dreams;
No thought in you to over-ride,
No vanity or foolish pride;
But full of love and sweet content,
Your very soul's with nature blent.
Then, as the days pass swiftly by,
Your heart emits a soft sweet sigh.

I do not call it wasting time,
To sing a song in verse or rhyme,
God whispers, and I hear Him call,
And sing the song, that it may fall
On hearts that's full of sympathy,
For those who live in misery;
And hearing, lift those fallen up,
And take from them the bitter cup.

This is my mission here on earth;
May I prove worthy of my birth,
May all my songs float high and wide
And their influence over-ride
The mean and low-born, filthy schemes
Of foxy scoundrels, in their dreams,
Who seek to take advantage here,
Regardless of the poor one's tear.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHEN THE FULL MOON

When the full moon is shining bright,
And stars above are gleaming;
And soft, pale rays of milky light,
All o'er the earth are beaming,
I love to walk beneath the trees,
'Midst shadows softly glowing,
And feel the gentle evening breeze
Upon my cheeks a-blowing.

I love to dream a silent dream,
While nature seems reposing;
And listen to the rhythmic stream,
Its secrets all disclosing.
'Tis then I lift my heart above
To God, the great Creator,
And realize He rules with love,
All in this world's theater.

OH, FRIEND OF MINE

Oh, friend of mine, the golden glow
Of youth is gone—my head's like snow;
And often now I moan and sigh
For dear old days that have passed by.

They never can return again—
Those dear old days so free from pain—
Those golden years of youthful dreams,
So full of joy and sunny beams.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In misty vision I can see
The winding road that used to be;
The trees that shaded by the way,
The place where once we loved to play.

I hear again the bird's sweet song—
The mocking bird that trilled so strong—
I see and hear the bees all hum—
The orchard and the rip'ning plum.

I see the tassels on the corn,
The tangled thicket full of thorn,
The fields of grain spread out to view,
And sunny skies of deepest blue.

Oh, friend of mine, when we were young,
Sweet hope was bright—the birds all sung.
But now, in looking back today,
The hope is gone—has passed away.

But, friend of mine, old mem'ry's dream
Brings to the heart a sunny beam;
And though a tear bedims the eye,
Still joy is felt in each soft sigh.

The past sweet dreams can ne'er return,
But through that past we may discern
More clearly what life's values are,
And future life may yield a star.

Then, friend of mine, at the last scene,
When the sun has set with golden sheen,
May you pass out without a sigh,
And upward wing to God on high.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

IF IN MY VERSE

If in my crude and dreamy verse
Some pleasure will instill,
And somewhat of your cares reverse—
It will its mission fill.

In after years, when left alone,
And hope has met defeat,
Should song of mine for grief atone—
Then, its mission is complete.

WHEN THE HEART'S FULL OF LOVE

When the heart's full of love,
And your thoughts are above—
And the soul is content,
And the mind with God's blent—
You will feel a sweet calm,
Like a soft healing balm,
For your life will be joy,
With good things to employ.

When at peace with all men,
With your voice or with pen,
You can speak, or can write,
Some sweet song of delight,
That will fill with a thrill
Some poor heart that is ill,
And restore it to health,
By the pow'r of love's wealth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Then a joy will be thine
That's akin to divine,
For you'll feel in your soul
That the Lord has control;
And your smile will entrance,
Though it be but a glance,
Every one that you meet,
In a palace or street.

Oh, the wealth of great love
That descends from above,
When our hearts are all right—
Fills the soul with delight.
And we just love all things,
And a song upward springs,
Not a cloud in the sky,
For our Savior is nigh.

I CAN NEVER RETURN

I can never return where the journey began,
For the brambles are thick, where the old highway ran;
The footpath is gone—not a sign or a track,
Nor a guiding post, that will point the way back.

I started the journey to the land of dreams
In the spring of the year, when the sunshine beams;
The birds were all singing a sweet song of cheer,
My footsteps were lightsome—not a sigh or a tear.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The murmur of waters that rippled along,
Just sang to me daily, a sweet gurgling song;
And the rustling of leaves that swayed to the breeze,
Displayed all their beauty in the top of the trees.

But the frost of the winter, nipped the blooms of the
 spring,
And blighted all beauty with a cold, icy sting;
It left me all saddened a pathway to tread,
'Midst nature all barren and hopes that were dead.

Like a child that is lost in the midst of a wood,
I circle about—would return if I could;
But I've wandered afar—bewildered I stand,
And am lost in a wilderness of sinking sand.

FOND MEMORY

Fond memory will ever trace,
 In glancing back the years,
Each feature of your dear old face,
 And fill my eyes with tears.

'Twill bring to mind the days endeared
 That never can return,
But which will ever be revered
 And cause the heart to burn.

The pleasant jaunts by lakes and streams,
 O'er hills and meadows green,
Will oft return in silent dreams,
 And thoughts of you, I ween.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The music of the rippling brook,
The gentle zephyr's breeze,
The trout we caught upon the hook,
The grand, majestic trees—

Each will again be brought to view,
And many a wildwood scene,
As often as I think of you,
Will also intervene.

Though age may bend and bow the frame,
And locks turn white like snow,
I'll think of you as just the same
You were in youth's young glow.

And when at last unto the dust,
Our bodies, they consign,
E'en then, while moldering in the crust,
May both our memories twine.

UPON THE LEVEL

"Do you meet upon the level?"
Said my wife to me, one day.
"I heard you say that Masons did—
Now, is this true, I say?"

'Twas only yesterday you said,
Let not the children play
With those of poor old Mr. Head.
For they were common clay.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

That we could not afford to be
On social terms with them;
That our select society
Would banish and condemn.

Now, say, is that your Masonry,
And that your boasted creed?
If so, I cannot fail to see—
It needs some love to breed.

I dropped my head in humble shame,
I sought excuse to find,
For poor old Head, a Mason,
Was a brother true and kind.

And careful since I've been, my friend,
Of thoughts that inward dwell,
For like dear Robert Burns, I say,
Such thoughts are born in hell.

I'M FOOTSORE AND WEARIED

I'm footsore and wearied with climbing the hill,
The ascent before me is yet higher still;
The footpath is narrow and winding in way,
I scarcely can finish the journey today.

The burden I carry is heavy indeed,
And fain would I tarry for rest that I need;
But voices are calling for me to ascend,
And up, though appalling, the journey to end.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I struggle and stumble and fall by the way—
My footsteps quite often slip on the soft clay;
Though strength is declining, I dare not to stop,
For while the sun's shining, I must reach the top.

Just stumbling and struggling with each step I take,
Cheered by the spring's bubbling, my soul's thirst to
 slake,
I'm nearing the haven, the haven of rest,
I'll soon end the journey and be with the blest.

CATHERINE EUGENE

Wee, tender little violet,
 With lovely eyes of blue,
Like diamonds in a jewel set
 Of purest water, true—
I catch the innocent sweet beam
 That sparkles in each eye—
Like summer's chastened evening's gleam
 Upon an azure sky.

I would thy feet may ever tread
 In paths where flowers blow,
And though they droop and petals shed—
 May your life sweetly glow.
May hope in joy's fruition end
 As each year passes by,
And may your spirit ever blend
 With that of God on high.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I PLUCKED A ROSE

I plucked a rose—'twas blushing red,
Like a young bride in bridal bed;
Its beauty lived a few brief hours,
Then fading, fell in petal showers.

The petals lay in beauty there,
Reminding of the rose so fair;
But like lost virtue's darkened stain,
The rose can never bloom again.

The blushing beauty of its youth
Was plucked from stem without a ruth;
Now, like a maid who gave her all,
The leaves are tramped on as they fall.

The odor sweet that once was there
No longer scents the evening air;
But like a corpse, its petals pale,
Have lost their strength and now are stale.

Just so, sweet maid with beauty's eye—
The loss of virtue is to die;
To trust too much to men on earth,
Will make you curse the day of birth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

YOU WILL FIND A FEW MASONS THERE

From the cold, distant land of Arctic zone,
Where the bleak winds ever do sigh and moan—
From far away Afric's hot bleaching sand,
Where the sons of Ham inhabit the land—
From the tropical clime of Mexico,
Where the warm gulf stream doth ever flow—
From the tangled thicket of Amazon,
Where the great, great river doth ever run—
From the east to the west, from the north to the south,
In the land of rain, or the land of drouth—
Where the sunshine beams or the zephyrs blow,
Or ever is seen perpetual snow—
Where flowers bloom in perpetual spring,
Or blighted is beauty with icy sting—
Or song birds singing with every breath,
Or on the desert as silent as death—
Among all the races of this old earth,
From the breath of God that was given birth—
Be they white, or yellow, or black or red,
With palace or tent, or tree overhead—
You will always find a few Masons there,
Who meet upon the level, and part upon the square.

'TIS BEST

'Tis best to bathe in all the gleams
Of sunny joys on earth—
To catch the golden happy beams,
As they are given birth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The heart that makes the face to smile
Is an inheritance—
That will all gloomy thoughts beguile,
And happiness enhance.

Each sunny beam of golden sheen
Gives pleasure to the eye,
But as dark clouds shift in between,
The heart emits a sigh.

Though transient is each sunny ray,
'Tis best to count it gain;
Tomorrow, clouds may spread our way,
And fill the heart with pain.

TINKLING OF THE ICE

Did you ever hear the tinkling
Of the ice in times that's past—
When your throat was simply parching
Like a redhot furnace blast?

Oh, the music is entrancing
As you hear the cold ice clink—
And you almost feel like dancing
As you greedy grab and drink.

Oh, the joy, delicious pleasure,
When you press it to your lips—
And enjoyment without measure
Feel, when down your throat it slips;
How it gurgles in its journey
As it cools the fevered breast,
And you turn upon your pillow,
Feeling that you have been blest.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, I tell you, for enjoyment,
When you've been the merry round—
On the night, when for employment,
Such a jolly crowd you found—
That the greatest of all pleasure,
Is not found in sin and vice—
But it's just a glass of water,
With a piece or two of ice.

Oh, you may despise the water
When the whiskey is around—
But by daylight the next morning,
For ice water you'll be bound;
And you'll press the button roughly
With the call for water boy—
And the echo of his footsteps,
Will just fill you full of joy.

Then you'll lie with misty feeling,
While the webs within you weave—
And remorse o'er conscience stealing—
Though half drunk, will make you grieve;
And you'll swear in drunken sorrow,
That you'll cut the habit out—
And forget before the morrow—
To indulge another bout.

Yet there's joy, though it is harmful,
On most any pleasant night—
With a lot of jolly fellows,
While old barleycorn's in sight—

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Just to sit around a table,
Pass the bottle to and fro—
And take a drink for Auld Lang Syne,
To the friends you used to know.

Oh, congenial is the hour,
Though the pleasure does not last—
For by daylight you'll be sour—
Then you will regret the past;
Oh, 'tis then you'll call for water,
And you'll hurry up the boy,
And the echo of his footsteps
Will just fill your soul with joy.

OH, THE JOY OF SPREADING

Oh, the joy of spreading sunshine
In the pathway of this life;
To drop a love word here and there,
To grow in beauty rife;
To make some saddened heart to smile—
Forgetting all the strife—
Some deed or word that may beguile,
And brighten up a life.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHERE SWEET WATERS FLOW

I long for the pleasure
Of sweet restful peace—
The calm, joyful measure
Of freedom and ease;
To lie in sweet rapture,
'Neath shade of the trees—
Where beauty doth capture,
And bloweth the breeze.

To lie silent dreaming
Where sweet waters flow,
And sunshine is beaming
With radiant glow;
To drift with the sunshine,
Soft sinking in west—
Like an angel divine,
Preparing to rest.

To scent the sweet showers
Of life-giving dew,
While sheltered by bowers
Of nature's green hue;
To hear the soft sighing
Of wind in the trees,
While autumn leaves, dying,
Float out on the breeze.

To hear the sweet purling
Of streamlets that flow,
All dashing and curling,
As onward they go.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

My thoughts ever drifting
With each flowing wave,
Where shadows are shifting
On waters that lave.

Oh, give me the pleasures
And freedom from care—
'Midst old nature's treasures,
And beauties so rare;
Just let me lie dreaming
Beneath the green trees,
With loving thoughts teeming,
And heart at its ease.

SOON WILL COME

Soon will come the twilight evening
When the call to me shall come,
And my soul—with its sweet sheening—
Will ascend to its last home.

Will the veil, to future screening,
Then be parted to my view?
All the mystery's true meaning,
That in life I never knew?

Will its glory, all revealing,
Swell my heart with triumph's song?
Or, still mystery concealing—
Yet my anxious heart prolong!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Will it be an awesome glory
Thund'ring echoes through the skies?
Or, the gladsome sweet old story
Of the Christ, who did arise!

Shall a hallelujah sounding,
Greet me with an angel throng?
Or amongst great billows, bounding,
Shall my soul just float along!

I would fain to know the meaning,
Whether it be joy or woe—
Ere the twilight's last soft gleaming
Folds my soul in its sweet glow.

TO FRIENDS UNKNOWN

Have you ever read a letter
From some stranger far away—
Who said he'd read your poem,
Published in the news that day?
That it filled his heart with gladness—
And for you he'd ever pray,
For it drove away his sadness—
Though he was aged and gray!

Do you know the joy it gave you
As you read the letter through?
How it made you love the writer—
For he seemed so good and true!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

How your heart went out toward him—
And you felt as if you knew
The very thoughts that filled him,
As he wrote the words to you.

How it filled your heart with pleasure
As you read it o'er and o'er!
For your joy was without measure—
And you read it just once more!
And you read it to your loved ones,
And then watched them o'er it pore—
Then filed that letter safe away
'Mongst your other precious store.

Oh, the joy that it may give you
In the twilight of your life;
When your heart is full of grieving—
Sore and sick with mortal strife—
Just to rummage 'mongst your precious store
And find a beauty rife,
In the loving words addressed to you—
It may brighten up your life.

OH, LITTLE MAID

Oh, little maid with eyes of blue,
Why pensive now and sad?
Your laddie's heart is true to you,
And this should make you glad.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

What though he danced with other girls,
And scarcely glanced at you!
Your lovely face and head of curls
Was ever in his view.

He's crowned you queen within his heart,
And every beat is true;
He suffers from a jealous dart—
You danced with others, too.

Then smile, sweet maid with love-lit eyes,
And dart a glance his way;
Your heart will throb with glad surprise—
For he'll return that day!

A TRICKLING, TINY SPRING

A trickling, tiny little spring,
Down mountain side doth flow and sing.
It winds around the rocks and roots,
And over many a cascade shoots.

In softest accents sweet and clear,
It sings a song of hope and cheer;
The birds take up the rhythmic notes,
And music swells from gushing throats.

Along its banks of verdant green,
Full many a bud and bloom is seen,
While reed and brush and waving rush,
Puts all the art of man to blush.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In valleys green, 'neath mountain's side,
Forever flows the tiny tide—
Its golden bosom flashing gleams
Of pearly crystals through sunbeams.

I love to lie and drift and dream,
And listen to the little stream,
As on it goes meandering
With rhythmic, low, sweet murmuring.

It softly sighs with balmy breeze,
And joins its voice with swaying trees;
While I lie silent, drifting on
To dreamy lands of misty dawn.

MY OLD BLACK MAMMY

How well I remember
When I was a child,
My dear old black mammy,
So gentle and mild.
I see the bandana
That covered her head,
As kindly she tucked me
To sleep in my bed.

Her face, though a black one,
Just filled you with love;
For true was the heart beats
That came from above;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Her arms ever ready
To gather me in,
To steady when stumbling,
And keep me from sin.

In sickness and sorrow,
Old mammy was there,
Just like a dear angel
In answer to prayer.
'Twas comfort to see her
In such times of need,
For mammy would heal you,
And cheerfulness breed.

At calling of country—
And father obeyed—
Old mammy was true blue,
And with mother stayed.
In silence of midnight,
When hearts beat with dread—
Old mammy would hover,
And watch 'round our bed.

Her comforting presence
Would calm us to sleep—
For mammy was right there,
To guard and to keep.
She watched o'er our slumbers
With sweet, loving care,
And cheered my dear mother
When filled with despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I know she's in heaven,
And free from all care;
Her face, though a black one,
Is beautiful there—
For Jesus, the dear Lord,
Just views the inside,
And draws near the kind heart,
Where love doth abide.

She's waiting in glory
With those gone before,
To welcome her laddie
To that blessed shore;
I know when the time comes
For me to ascend—
Old mammy will be there—
My needs to attend.

RETROSPECT

Tonight I sit in grievous thought,
Reviewing what my life has wrought;
Like writings that Belshazzar saw—
The backward glance fills me with awe.

In balancing the good with bad,
The trial sheet makes me feel sad;
For as the good is credited
So are the bad things debited.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The debit sheet is very long,
And shows the things that I've done wrong;
While here and there's a heavy stroke,
To indicate the hearts I've broke.

The strokes are light where I've done good,
Because I failed in what I should;
The debit side's a heavy cross—
I've charged it off to profit's loss.

The loss I never can regain;
I cannot take back things that pain—
For even though I made amend,
The sheet still shows I lost a friend.

ALL THE LITTLE BIRDS ARE SINGING

All the little birds are singing,
Singing a sweet melody,
And the hills and dales are ringing,
Ringing with the jubilee.

Buds and blossoms all are swelling,
Bursting into beauty rare;
'Midst old nature's garden dwelling,
Many are the flowers fair.

Trickling streams are gently flowing,
Flowing near the mountain sides,
And the sunshine cause a glowing,
Golden glowing on the tides.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Gentle zephyrs softly blowing,
Fanning all the valley green;
Spring sunshine instead of snowing,
Glinting with a lovely sheen.

In the distance, lofty mountains
Reaching up toward the skies;
Down the side flow raging fountains,
Causing misty clouds to rise.

Golden glints through them are streaming
With a rainbow's tinting hue,
All the colors softly beaming
With a tint of lovely blue.

Overhead the trees are greening,
And the birds are nesting there;
Soon their young they will be weaning,
And their songs will fill the air.

Underneath the trees I'm dreaming,
While sweet music fills the air;
And my soul with love is teeming,
For I'm full of heartfelt prayer.

CRITICISM

You've bruised and stabbed my tender heart,
And lowered its conceit
By criticism's cruel dart,
And smothered it complete.

OPTIMISM

I cannot pierce the distant veil of time,
Nor can I tell what future years may bring;
I joy in present things that seem sublime,
And with contented happiness I sing.

I cannot change the things that God ordains,
Nor will resentment make my burdens less;
If He has willed that I should suffer pains,
He also wills some other things that bless.

Each day, I see more plainly the great truth,
That God, in wisdom doeth all things best;
He checks the impulses of man in youth,
That in his elder days, he may be blest.

To youth, all future years are full of hope,
Nor dims an azure sky to distant view;
Bright, pictures all the future horoscope,
And all seems beautiful, and good, and true.

To age, the future years loom not so bright,
For past old ghostly fears are frightful still—
The disillusion of youth's dreams cause fright,
And fearsome doubts, the aged heart doth thrill.

But when resigned, we trust it all to God—
Both age and youth are on a level plane;
And to the end, when melted into clod,
What now seems loss, will only prove our gain.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

SWEET THINGS

I can write of sweet things, too,
Like the violet so blue;
Tell you how in woods they grow,
Peeping out with spring's first glow;
Tell you lovers gather them,
Plucking up the roots with stem,
Placing them with tender care
In a vase of costly ware.

Ah, the tint of lovely blue,
Freshed by early morning's dew—
Fills the lover with a bliss
Like the ecstasy of a kiss,
Delicate as a maiden's flush,
Tender as her first love blush;
Melting like a flake of snow
With the warmth of its own glow.

In the likeness of its hue,
Are her eyes of tender blue,
Shyly peeping 'neath the lash,
Love betraying in each flash;
There's a darling dimple, too,
In the cheek that's turned to you,
And sweet cherry lips of bliss,
Aye, inviting for a kiss.

Here's a cluster on a vine—
Grapes all full of juicy wine,
Jocund as a maiden's blood
In first flush of womanhood;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Here's an apple red with glow,
Rip'ning where the blossoms blow;
Robin, on the cherry tree,
To his mate sings merrily.

Little rills and singing brooks,
Mossy dells and pleasant nooks,
Valleys green and flowery dales,
Time of year when spring regales,
Birds all singing in the trees,
Balmy air and busy bees—
I can write of sweet things, too,
And I have—now, say, can't you?

I'VE WANDERED MUCH

I've wandered much from land to land,
A-seeking for prosperity;
And still I live from hand to hand,
But care naught for adversity.

Distance, enchantment lends to view,
Where flowers all bloom gaily;
And freshened by hope's morning dew,
I change domicile daily.

Yet, reimbursement I receive,
That fully doth repay me;
The change of scenes and hopes that weave
In beauty, ever sways me.

Sometimes in valleys I reside,
Then on the hills and mountains,
Just drifting careless with the tide
Of thoughtless human fountains.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

PINNED TO A DOLL RAFFLED FOR ORPHANS

God is ever a true lover—
Loves through other folks, you know;
Sends his angels down to hover,
And make little faces glow.

In this world He's planted kindness,
That the seed may ever grow,
Though at times it seems all blindness,
Yet sweet blessings ever flow.

Hearts of love are ever ready
A sweet blessing to bestow;
Just believe and stand you steady—
God is watching you below.

God is father, God is mother,
And through others He will care;
In his arms He'll love and smother,
If you will but snuggle there.

May this doll both bless and cheer you—
Give it love and tender care;
Ever keep it close and near you—
Smile each day and grow more fair.

LIVES THERE A MAN?

Lives there a man on this old earth,
A real true man of noble worth?
A man that's always true and square—
In all his dealings clean and fair?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A man, to golden rule, sincere,
Who feels within a conscience clear?
Who strikes a chalk line true and straight,
And will not from it deviate?

Is such a man amongst the great—
Receiving honors from the State?
Does honest conscience rule his mind,
Or wealth, through graft, just make him blind?

Does the best good for humankind
Encourage him to seek and find
Some just law that may govern all—
The poor and low, the rich and tall?

Is such an one amongst the poor
That passes daily by your door,
Who gives an honest full day's work,
Who never does his labor shirk?

Is such amongst the middle class,
Who, by the golden rule, can pass?
Who, honest in his heart, can say,
I'm clean and fair in every way?

Is there amongst the ministry
One heart that's full of charity?
One heart that equals rich and poor,
And levels both at his church door?

Oh, show me just one man on earth
Possessed of true and noble worth;
One man that's always true and square
In all his dealings, clean and fair.

I LIFT MY HEART

I lift my heart to Thee, oh God,
Amidst the mountains of Thy love;
Where nature's green o'erlays the sod,
Refreshed by showers from above.

Eternal blessings ever flow
From the great fountains of Thy heart,
Like many waters, sweet and low,
To quench the thirst of panting hart.

The beauty that is spread to view
From every lofty mountain peak,
The valleys green, and skies of blue,
Of Thy great love doth ever speak.

Oh, what is man, that Thou dost care
To count the hairs of his poor head,
And lift him from his dark despair,
And raise his body from the dead?

'Tis said Thou knowest our poor frame;
That we are naught but grains of sand—
That we are born in sin and shame,
And cannot in Thy presence stand.

Yet Thou dost love each weak one here,
Though poor and humble worms of dust—
And givest to each heart sweet cheer,
For Thou art kind as well as just.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

What wealth can we poor mortals add
Unto the glory of Thy throne?
'Thou, who art with all glory clad,
And pow'r to make bread out of stone?

Oh, love, sweet mystery so great,
That fills the Father's heart above,
What is there in poor man's estate
To justify omniscient love?

No merit of Thy love have we,
Nor yet of Him whom Thou didst give
To lift us from sin's misery,
That we might ever with Thee live.

Then help us, Thou Omniscient One,
To merit the great sacrifice
Of Jesus Christ, Thine only Son,
Who dwells with Thee in paradise.

And when our work on earth is done,
And twilight glimmers in the west,
May we go home with sinking sun
To an eternal land of rest.

HAS YOUR SHIP COME IN?

Has your ship come in from the mystic sea,
That sailed from the harbor so gallantly,
With the wave of many a God-speed hand,
On its way to the faraway, dreamy land?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

'Twas years ago since it sailed with the tide,
With hope for its crew, and faith for its guide,
Yet never a word—though you daily go—
Is heard from the ship—and your heart throbs so!

Has it sunk, think you, with all of its crew?
Been wrecked in the storms that so fiercely blew?
Or is the brave ship still riding the wave,
With its crew of hope still valiant and brave?

Do you still have faith in the ship that sailed
To the land of dreams, in mystery veiled?
Or say you just now, as old age bends the form,
My good ship has foundered—gone down in the
storm!

I STILL HAVE FAITH

Aye, I still have faith in the ship that sailed
To the land of dreams, in mystery veiled;
For my heart still trusts, and I daily go
To the port where the tide doth ebb and flow.

Though the storms may beat, and the waves run high,
Yet behind each cloud is a shining sky;
And though aged now, I am strong and hale,
And I hope some day that I'll greet the sail.

Soon the storm will pass, and the calm will come,
Then the ship will steer for the harbor, home.
And I doubt me not, for my faith is bold,
That it will return with a freight of gold.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

TAKE ME BY THE HAND

Take me by the hand, and lead me
Through the paths of gloomy night,
While the shadows darkly hover
'Twixt me and the fading light.

Bear me o'er the sullen river,
Safely to the other shore,
Where my soul shall rest forever—
Rest to suffer pain no more.

Sing sweet songs while floating over,
Songs, my fainting spirit cheer;
Let them swell in one grand chorus
As the other shore we near.

And, when ended is the journey,
When we've reached the other side,
Take me to my blessed Master,
There forever, to abide.

FORGOTTEN

They gave him a stone
To pillow his head,
Then left him alone
To rest with the dead.

They left him to sleep
In silence profound,
Where green grass would creep
And cover the mound.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A few tears were shed—
A sob and a moan,
A torn heart that bled,
A sigh and a groan.

A neglected grave,
A fallen head stone,
Wild brambles that pave,
Rank weeds overgrown.

And sad is the sound
Of April's rain weep,
That waters the ground
Where wild flowers peep.

The years pass along—
Joy takes place of grief;
A shout and a song,
Ah, mem'ry is brief.

Forgotten and gone—
A spirit once gay
Now waits for the dawn
Of eternal day.

THE SALVATION LASSIE

Oh, there is a winsome lassie,
Dressed in the plainest blue,
And her eyes just flashes sunshine
As she looks straight at you.



"A neglected grave,
A fallen head stone."



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, her cheeks are like the roses,
All blushing with a glow,
And her lovely face discloses
A heart that's pure as snow.

Oh, she wears the cutest bonnet
Above her pearly ears,
And the eyes that peep beneath it
Dissolves away all tears.

Oh, her lips are like the berries
Refreshed by morning dew,
And her breath is like the cherries
Of balmy winds own brew.

Oh, her eyes are like the sunbeams
That sparkle in the skies,
So full of tender, loving gleams,
They fill my heart with sighs.
Oh, she is the dearest lassie,
With an air demure and sweet,
And always full of charity,
At home or on the street.

HEARTS THAT BEAT TRUE

There's many a heart that beats real true
Beneath a rough exterior view;
Hearts that are warmer than you may think,
Although the face shows many a kink.

Many a wrinkled and scarred old face
Within, has a heart of love and grace;
While many a face that's fair to view,
Is false at heart and will prove untrue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

ACROSTIC

May fragrant flowers sweetly blow
In paths that you may tread;
Life's sweetness—may it ever glow
Delightful o'er your head.
Rich be your future years, my dear,
Endowed by God on high,
Denying naught but grief's sad tear
Bestowed on those who sigh.
United to the one you love,
Redeeming pledges made,
Ne'er lose your trust in God above,
Each evil thought evade.
These lines apply to future life—
Then you will grow in beauty rife.

MAGNOLIAS BLOOM

(Tune: Old Kentucky Home)

Magnolias bloom in my dear old Southern home,
Sweet odors float out on the breeze;
The blossoms loom like a marble palace dome,
'Midst the dark green foliage of the trees.
The alfalfa, now in carpets of deep green,
And clover, is spread out to view;
There's naught to mar, or take from the pleasant scene,
And the skies overhead are ever blue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The corn top's ripe and the cotton is in bloom,
The darkies are resting a spell;
The birds all pipe, and their songs dispel all gloom,
For they seem a happy time to tell.
The pale moon gleams with a soft sweet glowing light.
The shadows all flit to and fro;
The soft sweet beams fills the lover with delight,
While the mock birds cause the heart to glow.

My heart returns, oh, no matter where I roam,
Where the mock bird's song fills the air;
And sadly yearns for the soft sweet Southern gloam,
And the flowers blooming ever fair.
Then take me back to my dear old Southern home,
Where odors float out on the breeze;
Where blossoms loom like a marble palace dome
'Midst the dark green foliage of the trees.

Chorus

Take me back to Dixie,
Oh, take me back, I say;
For my heart returns to my dear old Southern home,
To my dear old Southern home, far away.

THE FAITHFUL FEW

There's a faithful few who are always true,
There are warm heart throbs that will welcome you;
Come, then, in response to this cordial call,
There's a grip of the hand for one and all.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A DRIVE ALONG A COUNTRY ROAD

I was in an open buggy, driving 'long a country road,
Enjoying all the scenery, where nature old abode;
The sun was shining brightly and the flowers were in
bloom,
The trees with dark green foliage were full of birds
and plume.

The air was filled with music, both of birds and busy
bees,
While squirrels darted here and there among the leafy
trees;
The dogwood was in blossom and the honeysuckle, too,
And lovely was the scenery presented to my view.

The cows were browsing lazily upon the carpet green,
While here and there, a-peeping out, a daisy could be
seen;
A crumbling old log cabin, with the roof all caving in,
The chimney built of mud and sticks, showed where man
once had been.

A winding path amid the bush led downward to a spring,
Where many parched thirsts were quenched, while birds
o'erhead did sing;
An old deserted orchard, and a house in distant view,
That called to mind your childhood days, as back your
memory flew.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The cedar and the myrtle trees were there, all full of
bloom,

But, ah, so quiet was the place it filled you with its
gloom;

You saw as in some flimsy dream your mother's smiling
face,

When all about was full of life, and children filled the
place.

You saw the table laden down with much of goodly store,
And heard your little brother Tom a-crying for some
more;

You thought of him, the godly man, who had the church
near by,

Who warned the people of their sins and often made
you cry.

You called to mind when he dropped in, and stayed for
dinner, too,

When all you children had to wait—it made you awful
blue.

How mother, knowing how you felt and fearful of your
cry,

Came out the side door with a plate just brimming full
of pie.

Oh, how it stirred your memory and called back to your
mind

The sweet old days of childhood, when things seemed
good and kind;

When mother tucked you in your bed and fondly kissed
good night

And smiling, said, "Have pleasant dreams," as she put
out the light.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, that I could old time turn back and be a child again,
That I might, in my mother's arms, find soothing for
all pain;
That I might pillow on her breast this aching head of
mine,
While 'round my hungry, yearning form her arms would
me entwine.

THERE NEVER WAS

There never was a picture
That was drawn by human hands,
As pretty as old nature—
Just as old nature stands.

For God created nature
According to His plan;
No art can e'er improve it,
Wrought by the skill of man.

Man imitates sweet roses,
And imitates them well;
But weak, his art discloses,
He cannot make them smell.

Though somewhat like its petals
Of glowing beauty rife,
'Tis but a dead leaf painted—
He cannot give ONE life.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

IF WE COULD ONLY TRUST

If we could only wholly trust
And rid our hearts of fear,
And realize that God is just,
His promises sincere;
That His dear hand is stretching out
To draw us to His breast—
We'd leap with joy, and sing and shout,
As close to Him we pressed.

WHEN I WAS A BOY

When I was a boy,
Oh, when I was a boy!
The earth was all green,
And this life was a joy.
My footsteps were light
And the sky ever bright;
I whistled and sang
With a joyous delight.

When I was a boy,
Oh, the pleasure and joy
To ramble the woods,
With naught to annoy;
To wade in the streams
And dream boyish dreams,
And drink in the rays
Of spring's sunny beams.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When I was a boy,
Oh, the streams would decoy,
And whisper a song—
Come now and enjoy.
My bosom is sweet,
Your form I will greet,
And give you the joy
Of a heavenly treat.

When I was a boy,
Oh, the springtime of joy!
The pleasure of youth,
That naught can destroy!
So happy and free,
A heart full of glee,
That I wish once again
Just a boy I could be.

A REVERIE

Sitting by my fireside, silent,
Dreamy visions come to me,
Trooping by in countless numbers,
And amongst them, friend, is thee.

Once again I see the waving
Of the ripn'ning fields of grain,
And I hear the song birds singing—
Mocking, after years of pain.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In the distance, hear the voices
Of the reapers' evening song;
See the sunset, golden glowing,
As we slowly walked along.

See your face, all animated,
As we spoke of future years—
Years that seemed all bright and smiling,
Without griefs or sorrow's tears.

Sitting here I feel thy presence,
As the fireside glimmers bright;
Feel a very present nearness,
As my soul takes backward flight.

Mem'ries of sweet childhood teeming,
Like the rippling of a stream,
With the murmur of sweet music—
Fills me with a blissful dream.

All the buoyant hopes of childhood,
All the ships that sailed away—
All the dreams of fairy kingdom,
Blossomed, only to decay.

Yet tonight, while silent musing,
Both of present and of past,
I'm inclined to think that duty
Blossoms into joys that last.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

We can gather many lessons
From the dead and withered years;
Take the best that hope then gave us,
With our joys, were mingled tears.

If to duty we are faithful,
And for value, value give,
We will find, though faint and weary,
Hope will in fruition live.

THEY SENT SWEET FLOWERS

Though sore affliction laid me low
And kept me to my room,
The flowers that so sweetly blow
Have cheered me with their bloom.

The loving spirits that impel
A heart to sympathy,
Full many sorrows do dispel
And soothe all misery.

Oh, dear sweet friends, the lovely flow'rs
Cheered me with their sweet glow,
And helped me pass the painful hours
I had to undergo.

My heart will ever upward rise
In grateful gratitude
To God in love—above the skies—
Because you were so good.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

THE SIGHING OF THE WIND

Did you ever hear the sighing,
Just like some poor mortal dying,
Of the wind when it was blowing
Through a grove of pine trees, growing?

'Tis a sound of soft, sad wailing,
Like some spirit, anguished ailing,
Slowly dying, sadly crying,
Sobbing, moaning, then defying.

'Tis a requiem for the dead,
This sad music overhead,
And the saddest of all sounds
That is heard in nature's bounds.

Oh, the painful sound of moaning,
Like a million spirits groaning,
Stirs within your heart a feeling
That with God you should be kneeling.

And the sobbing and the sighing,
As if multitudes were dying,
Brings upon you a strange creeping,
Like a ghost was at you peeping.

Yet I love to lie at ease,
Down beneath the green pine trees,
List'ning to the soft, sad sigh,
Drifting with it, like I'd die.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Now it sinks in dying note,
Like the choking of the throat;
Then arise in thundrous tones
Shrieks and sobs, then sadly, moans.

And beneath the pine trees list'ning,
In your eyes the tears are glist'ning;
For in nature God seems talking,
Wants you with Him to be walking.

In the language that is spoken
By the wind that seems heartbroken,
You will find a greater teacher
Than you'll find in any preacher.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

There's light and shadow here and there
Amongst the paths of life;
Dark clouds today—tomorrow fair—
Here, blossoms; and there, strife.

Today the sun is shining bright
With golden rays of hope;
Tomorrow, clouds of darkest night
In which we blindly grope.

Beneath a smile there often lies
A heart that's full of grief;
In secret there are sobs and sighs,
And many a withered leaf.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

REST YOU, STRANGER

Stranger, stop within this bower—
Rest you here for one short hour;
Life is filled with light and shadow,
On the hill top or the meadow;
Though the sun shines e'er so brightly,
It is ever darkened nightly;
Always clouds precede the showers
That refresh the lovely flowers,
And though roses beauty show,
Pricking thorns beneath them grow.

Art thou anxious to be going
And try life's seed to be sowing?
Pause, oh, stranger, and be careful—
Know the harvest's sometimes fearful!
Though at present good things meaning,
Dark may be thy future gleanings;
Many things in life beguiling,
Only tends to man's defiling,
And the siren's lustful call
May turn all your crop to gall.

Now, though rainbow tints are glowing,
On the morrow, may be snowing!
Though the sun today is thrilling,
Clouds tomorrow may be chilling;
Youth at early morn, oh, stranger,
Seldom think or dream of danger,
But with careless steps, unseeing,
Tread a path they should be fleeing;
Rest you, stranger, rest an hour
Here beneath this shady bower.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Pause, oh, stranger, stop your dreaming
With such pleasant future teeming;
Know that life is full of troubles
And hopes vanish like mere bubbles;
Know that aspirations winging
From the heart that now is singing
To the earth may fall tomorrow,
Filling this same heart with sorrow;
Every day, new life beginning,
Find the same old thread is spinning.

ETERNITY

Sailing on the mystic sea,
Sailing through eternity;
Sailing, ever sailing on
With a never-ending dawn.

Time hath reigned eternally—
No Alpha-Omega be—
Chaos never was begun,
Always—ever—has time run.

Sailing, sailing, there's no time
In eternity's old clime;
Ne'er exhausted is the sand
Of eternal ocean's strand.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I LOVE TO WANDER O'ER THE HILLS

I love to wander o'er the hills
In spring, when all is green;
And hear the murmur of the rills,
'Midst nature all serene.

I love to sit upon the banks
And watch the streamlets flow;
And raise to God my silent thanks,
While inward feelings glow.

I love the ripple and the splash,
The murmur of it all,
As over rocks they twist and dash,
And down the rapids fall.

I love to watch the golden glints
Of colors all a-glow—
In softest shades of rainbow tints
That mingle with their flow.

I love the low sweet song they sing,
That echoes in the breeze,
As curling, purling, murmuring,
They water roots of trees.

I love to lie in dreamy ease
And silent drift along,
Fanned by the gentle evening breeze,
Lulled by the rythmic song.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Ah, happy is the soul that lives
 'Midst nature's solitude,
Whose every thought and heart beat gives
 A throb of gratitude.

Who calmly moves 'midst nature's scene,
 Where many flowers blow,
Where swelling buds and fragrant green
 Sweet blessings do bestow.

WHEN THE SUNSET SOFT IS GLOWING

When the sunset soft is glowing,
And the western breeze is blowing,
All my dreamy thoughts go drifting
Out beyond where clouds are shifting,
To a land of hope's sweet ending,
Where fruition's joys are blending.

Ah, the beauty of its gleaming,
With a golden color beaming,
In the horizon, down dipping,
Like in ocean it was slipping,
Fills my heart with soft sweet dreaming
Of a land with angels teeming.

And the radiant glow, all tinting,
With a golden color glinting,
Seems to demonstrate the story
Of the mansions full of glory;
And a joyous time foretelling
When with God I shall be dwelling.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

JOHN WILLIAM HEAD, JR.

Ring out, ring out, ye bells, and shout,
For all is joy and love;
A tender, lovely little sprout,
Has come from heav'n above.
God saw two lonely hearts that bled,
And in each eye a tear—
So He just sent John William Head
To comfort and to cheer.

YOU ASK ME?

You ask me why a cloud of shade
Doth ever o'er me spread,
And why my face, deep interlaid,
Shows that sweet joys have fled?
In early days of ardent youth,
I felt me full of cheer;
I thought the world was full of truth,
All goodness and sincere.

Just full of confidence and love
I wended on my way;
Each beat of heart was raised above,
And sunny was each day.
The birds all sang so sweetly then,
The flowers bloomed so fair;
I thought me naught but good of men—
My heart was free from care.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Each day bloomed into new-born hope,
And each day was a smile;
Bright pictured all the horoscope
With beauty to beguile.
The streams all sang so merrily,
My heart throbbed with delight;
And, ah, I wended cheerily
And sang both day and night.

But as the years passed swiftly by,
The withered leaves fell down
At call of autumn's mournful sigh,
And turned all sere and brown.
The flowers once that bloomed so fair
No longer beauty shed,
But 'mongst the dead leaves lying there
Seemed whispering, hope is dead.

The frost of winter nipped the bud
And chilled the balmy air,
And froze my ardent, youthful blood,
And killed hope with despair.
It left me all alone to grope
Amidst old nature bare,
All disillusioned, without hope,
And full of grief and care.

ROBIN RED BREAST

Oh, robin, sing your lays,
I've never heard you sing;
But Lowell speaks your praise,
As on the way you wing.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When cold the winters blow
And north is bleak and bare,
And driving sleet and snow
Makes icy cold the air—

You spread your wings and fly
To where the roses blow,
To sunny Southern sky,
And evening's golden glow.

There, you are mute and still,
For king of songsters sing;
The mocking bird's sweet trill
Just makes you droop your wing.

Yet I would not despise
Thy humble little note,
Should songs of thine arise
And on the breezes float.

God made the lovely rose,
He also made the weed
And everything that grows,
And each one fills a need.

We cannot all be king,
But we can fill our place,
And each of us can sing
With happy, smiling face.

Oh, robin, robin dear,
I love you, dear sweet bird,
And welcome you each year,
Though your song I've never heard.

A WHITE ROSE

Today a white rose
Doth gently repose
On my aching breast
To soothe its unrest.
For mother 'tis worn.
Though I am forlorn,
Her dear face I see
In sweet memory.
She's now in repose,
And many a rose
Blooms over her grave
And borders the pave.
And oft from the stem
I pluck one of them,
To wear o'er my heart
To soothe it in part.
Oh, white diadem
Of roses, the gem,
An emblem discreet
Of purity sweet,
Bloom over, this day,
Her cold bed of clay,
And over her head
A canopy spread

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Of petals of white,
To chase away night.
Let each flower blend,
In beauty transcend,
To make the spot fair,
Without a compare,
For my mother
Is resting there.

A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE POEM, YOU SAY?

A beautiful little poem, you say?
Composed by one who has passed away;
The words so beautiful to the ear,
That in your album you placed it here?

No wording that I have ever known
Can equal the music, by winds blown,
Nor any that I have ever heard,
Compare in melody to a bird.

The gurgling music of one small brook,
Is sweeter than words in any book;
To gaze upon a beautiful rose
Gives greater pleasure than verse or prose.

Man has invented many an art;
To make life pleasant, has taken part;
But God made nature, just as you see—
It can't be improved by you and me.

A FADED LEAF

'Tis but a faded leaf
Has left its impress here,
Yet fills my heart with grief
For one I still hold dear.

'Twas forty years ago
Since first she placed it here;
She was in youth's young glow,
And gave her love sincere.

The years passed on and on,
Forgotten was the leaf;
But after she was gone
I found it in my grief.

'Twas crumpled with its age,
But left the impress still
Upon the open page,
And gave my heart a thrill.

I pressed the impress there,
Upon my quivering lips;
My heart, so full of care,
Throbbled with spasmodic grips.

Swift back my mem'ry flew
As I sat grieving there,
A retrospective view
I took, in my despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I thought of her sweet ways,
Her welcome, cheery kiss;
Of happy olden days
When life seemed full of bliss.

I thought of her first born,
Whose features I could trace;
Each breaking of the morn,
Her mother's darling face.

Of happy days sped by,
When she was by my side;
Of joy in earth and sky,
When she became my bride.

Then dark became the cloud,
When two pale forms lay there;
I bought a double shroud
To dress my darlings fair.

Then a white marble stone
Was placed between two graves,
And I was left alone
To sadly grieve and rave.

The years passed on and on,
My grief I did controll,
And yet each breaking dawn
They communed with my soul.

I've left a vacant space
Where shortly, side by side,
My body friends will place
Close by my sweet young bride.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And when the trumpets sound
And angels fill the air,
I'll answer with a bound
And meet my darlings there.

My hair's now white as snow,
My form is bent with age,
Now soon to them I'll go—
I've reached the seventh stage.

I'll close the book with care,
The impress I will leave,
If others find it here,
Pray for me do not grieve.

For I'll be gone above
To where there is no grief,
Where all is joy and love,
And there's no withered leaf.

I CANNOT SING

I cannot sing a song tonight,
The harp is out of tone,
And will not swell to lofty height,
But breaks down with a moan.

I am so full of worldly care,
So burdened with the load
My very soul seems to despair,
And rugged seems the road.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I've labored nearly three-score years,
I'm bending now with age;
I've shed some bitter scalding tears
In reading my life's page.

In glancing backward at the sheet
I'm startled at the sight,
And though repentance is complete,
'Tis no relief tonight.

I sit me here in gloomy thought
While sighs well from my heart,
And dwell on evil things I've wrought,
While conscience pain doth smart.

Oh, thou who readest all a-right,
Whose wisdom knoweth well
Temptations that we have to fight
To keep us out of hell—

Wilt thou with mercy deign to show
Me, just a little light,
As through the darkened paths I go,
With devils all to fight?

Be thou the staff to comfort me—
Come in my heart tonight,
And let me feel thy company,
My darkened soul to light.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

THEY COLDLY PASS ME BY

Once men bowed humbly at my feet
And plead for just one smile,
Now they pass by me on the street,
Although one made me vile.

First blush of love, I gave my all
To one I thought sincere,
And now I suffer bitter gall
From taunt and scornful sneer.

Avoiding are the eyes I meet
From those I once held dear
Not one of them will kindly greet,
But from me coldly sheer.

Forced from my happy childhood's home
By all my loved one's scorn,
I'm forced 'midst sinful things to roam—
Heartbroken and forlorn.

He who was cause of my downfall,
Who promised me so fair,
Still on my girlhood friends do call,
And they seem not to care.

They greet him with a kindly smile—
For me—a chilling stare
Although 'twas he that made me vile
And filled me with despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

On holy land Christ wrote on sand,
Let him first throw the stone
Who never sinned like Mary, and
Lo! they were left alone!

None say to me, "Go, sin no more,"
But lower try to shove;
Not e'en Christ's followers implore
To lift my soul above.

I do not sin from choice or lust—
I merely yield to fate;
The life I live fills with disgust
And all of it I hate.

I cannot raise myself alone—
Each day I bitter sigh,
For each one casts at me a stone
And coldly pass me by.

Does pity ever stir your heart
For fallen women, friend?
If so, then come and do your part
And help me life amend.

You all have mothers, this I know—
And some have sisters, too,
And some of them may fall also,
And shake you through and through.

There'd be none fallen but for men,
And this you know is true;
They once were innocent, you ken—
Still would be, but for you.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

On Judgment Day, before God's throne,
You'll learn the truth at last
That in His judgment, sex's unknown,
And He'll reveal your past.

Then give me just one kindly glance
To help to better way;
Forgive the past and give me chance,
Don't pass me by today.

GOD STOOD UPON

God stood upon the summit's height
And beckoned me, come up;
I gazed with rapture on the sight,
And joy was in my cup.

The mountain's side was steep and bare,
My feet were bruised and sore;
Rough stones were scattered here and there,
Bespeaking pain in store.

Yet with His glory there in sight
I started up the side,
With hope to guide my feet a-right,
And faith to over-ride.

I slipped and stumbled on the way
And often fell full length;
But hope just cheered me, day by day,
And faith still gave me strength.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The ascent steeper grew each day,
And rougher seemed the road;
But ever hope cheered on the way,
And faith made light the load.

At last I reached the very place
Where last I saw Him stand;
And though I could not see His face,
By faith, I grasped His hand.

Hope, in fruition ended here,
And faith was lost in sight;
No longer had I pain or fear—
God filled my soul with light.

A SPIRIT OF LOVE

May my life breathe forth a spirit of love,
Enlivened with power born from above;
And may my light shine with such radiant glow
That many may seek salvation to know.

May my life—not my words—preach sermons each day,
That will live through ages, forever and aye;
And may each sermon prove a beacon of light,
To lift up the fallen, and make their paths bright.

Oh, write me down, then, as a lover of men,
A heart full of love, shining out from within;
And when at the last I am called to ascend,
May I leave behind me full many a friend.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A DREAM

Last night, while silence reigned supreme,
There came to me the sweetest dream
Of angels gathered 'round my bed,
Who o'er my couch sweet incense spread.

They were not friends who'd gone before
To dwell upon the other shore,
But were just angels, dressed in white,
Surrounded by a wondrous light.

Their voices sounded like sweet bells
That on the Easter morning tells
Of birth of Jesus, Lord of All,
Before whom we should prostrate fall.

A soft, sweet music seemed to fill,
Like gurgling waters in a rill—
Their snow-white robes of dazzling bright,
And floated out upon the night.

In each sweet feature I could trace
Resemblance to the dear Lord's face;
And each sweet face, a healing balm,
Each spoken word, a sweet old Psalm.

In rapture gazed I with delight,
For wondrous was the heavenly sight;
E'en to describe fills with despair,
For human words would but impair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The wak'ning dawn dispelled the dream,
But from the east there came a gleam
Of golden sunshine o'er the hill,
That gave my heart a soft sweet thrill.

It seemed a messenger just sent
To fill my heart with sweet content,
For every radiant glist'ning beam,
Reminded me of my sweet dream.

HOPE WITHOUT JUDGMENT

Hope without judgment counts but naught
In this old world of ours,
For nothing comes to us unsought,
Though we may picture flowers.

It never in fruition ends
Without an effort's made,
To do the things that mostly tends
Sweet fortune to persuade.

'Tis simply childish to believe
That good things come by chance;
And fortune's favors we receive,
Though we but idly dance.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

'Tis best that optimistic hope
Should dwell within the breast,
To picture all the future scope
In colors of the best.

That we might joyous 'ticipate
The future years to come,
And not our feelings agitate
With pessimistic glum.

But hope that makes the heart aspire
To nobler things attain,
Is something that will sure require
Both industry and brain.

Then let us judgment with hope blend
And do our very best.
That hope may in fruition end—
Then trust God with the rest.

MAN'S NOBLEST THOUGHTS

Man's noblest thoughts are mostly born
When quietude steals o'er his soul;
'Midst nature's haunts at early morn,
Where balms abound that do console.
There he can lift his soul above
A sordid world of sin and greed,
And 'midst the simple things of love
Find something better far, than creed.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

HOW STANDS THE BALLOT

Dark in the south
 (The voice was low);
Dark in the west
 ('Twas spoken slow).
Dark in the east, the Master said,
And slowly, sadly, shook his head.

All was silent—
 A dismal pall
Seemed to settle
 Upon them all.
The secretary's head was bent
In absolute astonishment.

Then to his feet
 A man arose,
With quiet air
 And noble pose,
And said, brethren, what has been done,
Affects my loved and only son.

While this is true
 Be ye not grieved.
For if he's wronged,
 Don't be deceived—
The man who acts from spite or hate,
Will in the end be desolate.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

It may not be
In spite or hate
The ball was cast.
I hesitate
To lay a charge that's so severe
On any brother Mason here.

My son is young
And may have sown
Some sinful seed,
To me unknown;
And if he should unworthy be,
Then, after all, 'tis best, you see.

'Tis true this pains—
My heart it hurts;
But if he's false,
'Tis his deserts
And he must suffer for his sin;
'Twould be but proper discipline.

But if he's true,
As men should be,
Then God will help
Both him and me
To bear up bravely to the end,
And soon or late the wrong amend.

The lodge was closed
The usual way;
A father's heart
Was stabbed that day.
Who cast the ball? They never knew—
The boy was noble, good and true.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

AN ANGEL GUARDS

An angel guards my path through life,
No matter where I roam;
All through this world of grief and strife,
On land or on the foam.

No matter where I pillow head,
I find the angel there
Prepared before, the softest bed,
Though it be but a lair.

And there I sleep this tenement—
This tenement of clay—
Until all weariness is spent
And dawns another day.

I envy not the wealth I see,
For greater wealth in store
The angel has prepared for me,
Upon the other shore.

My heart is full of sweet content,
I calmly drift along;
My soul is with God's spirit blent
And fills me full of song.

He doth my sorrows all dispel,
He leadeth by the hand;
Some day in heaven I shall dwell
And with the angel stand.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

MUSING

In the twilight's soft'ning glow,
Shadows flitting to and fro,
Arched the skies like palace dome,
Frescoed with a flowery foam;
Twinkling stars in clustering crowd,
With a beauty God endowed,
Angels floating in the clouds,
Streaming out their pure white shrouds—
Birds all singing sweet and low
Where wild flowers, many blow;
In the soft sweet Southern gloam
Like a lover I will roam,
For emotion sweetly flows
As the evening twilight glows.

THERE'S A PLEASANT LITTLE BOWER

There's a pleasant little bower
Where I go at twilight hour,
Just to spend a few sweet moments all alone;
There the trailing vine and flower,
'Midst the trees that upward tower,
Lifts my heart above to God in heav'nly zone.

There I lie in silence dreaming,
While my heart with love is beaming,
And sweet memory flies backward on the wing;
For my mind with visions teeming
Sees dear faces all a-gleaming,
And my heart returns to youthful days o' spring.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, the joyous, youthful pleasure
That the heart will ever treasure,
In the sweet old days of childhood long ago;
When in times of sweetest leisure,
Full of 'joyment without measure,
All our hearts with ardent love did sweetly glow.

But the years pass on and sever
Ties that will come back, no, never;
But in memory those ties are buried deep;
And though cold and distant, ever,
In your heart you ne'er can sever
For a thought of them quite oft will o'er you creep.

So when cometh twilight hour,
Unto memory's sweet bower,
Oft I go to spend a moment all alone;
There with trailing vine and flower,
'Midst the trees that upward tower,
My full heart is raised to God in heav'nly zone.

I WONDER

When sinks the sun in golden west
And twilight soft appears,
I think of those whom I loved best,
The friends of early years.

When stars are twinkling overhead
And nature seems all still,
I think of all the loved ones dead,
And wonder at God's will.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I wonder why He took the best
And left the weakest here,
A-seeking o'er the earth for rest,
Filled with suspense and fear?

I wonder, when I take review
At strangeness of decree,
That He should take the good and true,
And leave just you and me.

Then as I wonder at God's will
I think 'tis manifest
That He doth all of heaven fill
With just the very best.

THE EVENING SHADOWS

The evening shadows of my life
Are drawing to a close;
I soon must leave this worldly strife
And with the dead repose.

In glancing back, the bygone years
Seem misty, like a dream;
The fearsome thoughts and foolish tears
Return in memory's gleam.

Experience hath now revealed
The follies of my youth,
And though from all the world concealed,
The Father knows the truth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I gave no thought in youthful glow
About the final end;
Nor that old age life's blood would slow
And mortal frame would bend.

My ardent blood flowed swift and warm,
With all of youth's hot fire;
I thought not of a grief or harm,
But yielded to desire.

Now, looking back on those sad years,
So full of sin and stain,
Remorseful conscience starts the tears
And fills my heart with pain.

For many years I've tried to mend
The wrongs that I have done,
That in the end, when I ascend,
I'd be with God's own Son.

THEY SAY WE CANNOT SING SO WELL

They say we cannot sing so well
When fifty years have passed;
That though a song from us may swell,
Its music will not last.
I'm sure they must mistaken be,
For God calls forth the song,
And ever will its melody
Through ages float along.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

No spoken word of sweetness yet
Has ever been destroyed,
Though for a time we may forget,
'Twill be again employed.
Its music sweet, in after years,
Will float out on the breeze,
And memory will start the tears
And many a heartache ease.

An old man's song, with fragrance sweet,
Is not to be despised;
His noble thoughts, in language mete,
Are oft immortalized.
God whispers to him as of old—
He tunes the dear old lyre,
And sings the song in language bold,
As God doth him inspire.

As long as God inspires the song
Immortal it will be,
And though the years may pass along,
You'll hear its melody.
For songs inspired come from above,
And never lose their power;
They fade, then rise beneath God's love,
Just like a lovely flower.

I CAN ONLY SING AN HUMBLE SONG

I can only sing you an humble song,
To cheer your spirit as you drift along.
I've nothing to say that you do not know,
As through life's pathway you ploddingly go.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

But if you gaze on the beauty each day
That is spread out to view in your pathway,
'Twill lighten the burden, the toil and the care,
And take from your heart all grief and despair.

Soul beauty is found in many a face,
Beneath scars and wrinkles that you may trace;
And many a gem that is hidden from view,
May be brought to light—discovered by you.

The beauty you find may often impart
A joy that may heal some poor broken heart
And brighten with smiles a face once of woe,
That may cause your own and others to glow.

OPPORTUNE

Keep ever hope before you,
And do your level best;
Ne'er let despondence sink you,
But struggle with the rest.

Though darkened clouds may hover,
Just bear this truth in mind:
That opportune's a rover,
And may be just behind.

Just bear up with a stout heart
And laugh misfortune down,
And nobly do your own part—
Then opportune will crown.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

New crops are gathered yearly—
They grow on the same ground;
And if you'll work sincerely
The harvest will abound.

But if you sit down daily
And fold your hands and sigh,
Old opportune, quite gaily,
Will skip and pass you by.

I FIRST SAW AND LOVED HER

I first saw and loved her
In morn's early life,
When flowers were blooming,
Their beauty all rife.
The spring buds were swelling,
And carpets of green
Spread over the landscape—
A beautiful scene.

The songs of all nature
Seemed singing to me,
As near her I sat 'neath
The shade of a tree.
Each eye told the story—
The story of love—
Transporting to glory,
To heaven above.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Soon after, we wedded
And moved in a cot,
And children have blest us—
Ah, happy's our lot!
We are aging and gray,
Our heart beats are true,
We have naught to regret,
Have nothing to rue.

Now, downhill we travel,
We'll soon pass away,
And rest us together
Beneath the cold clay.
Our lives have been happy,
Surrounded by love—
Together we'll journey
To heaven above.

WHEN DOUBTS ASSAIL

When doubt assails my fainting heart
And dark doth seem the hour,
I throw myself, majestic God,
On Thy almighty pow'r.

I cannot comprehend Thy way,
Nor what Thou hast in view;
The clouds seem darker day by day,
That hidest false from true.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I cast me down on beds of doubt
Without a staff or guide;
My heart, all human, sometimes flout,
And cast the Christ aside.

Yet with all human reasoning
The way seems dark and drear,
If I but knew the truth I'd sing,
And Thou canst make it clear.

Shouldst Thou but deign to hear my prayer,
Remove the cloud of doubt,
Each day would seem more wondrous fair,
And I would sing and shout.

THE RIVER OF TEARS

The river of sobs, and sighs and tears,
Is ever flowing along,
Filled with the debris of worldly cares,
Drearly singing its song.

Borne on its bosom are griefs and sighs,
Sickness and sorrow, and pain,
Ever renewing from darkened skies
The sad and hopeless refrain.

It mournfully sighs in winds that blow,
And wafts it from tree to tree,
Like ghostly spirits wailing their woe
In sorrow and misery.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Deep, deep, is the stream of human woes,
And deeper, lost hope's despair
Is wringing the heart with voiceless throes
Of many a grief and care.

Borne on its current, the drifting weed
Of many a sin-sick soul,
Reaping the harvest of past sown seed,
Is carried without control.

Out on the ocean's volume so vast,
Where the tide ebbs to and fro,
Sooner or later the debris is cast
And sinks to the depth below.

Ever returning for human freight,
Beginning again once more,
Soon is its bosom filled with the weight
Of those who were left before.

* * * * *

Again the drifting without control,
Again the wailing of many a soul,
Again to the ocean's mighty deep,
The debris will sink in one vast heap.

LONELY AMIDST THE CROWD

I live alone amidst the crowd
That daily pass me by;
And though unknown, I am too proud
To give way to a sigh.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I gave my heart's sweet youthful glow,
In early manhood's prime,
To one I thought as pure as snow,
Who would make life sublime.

Ah, disappointing were the years,
And sorrow's paths I trod;
Each day seemed full of grief and tears,
And heavy was the rod.

An ever-present, aching void,
Was always by my side;
No matter how I was employed,
'Twould in my heart abide.

My loving heart was choked with grief,
With agony and woe;
No Balm of Gilead for relief
Could I find here below.

In moody silence, day by day,
I plodded 'long life's road;
No ray of hope to cheer the way,
Or lighten up the load.

As years passed on and children came,
I thought me, now, indeed,
The blessings of sweet love will flame—
My hungry heart to feed.

But scarce they'd reached sweet youth's estate,
When I discovered fair,
Their mother had taught them to hate,
And filled me with despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

So I am lonely in the crowd
Surrounding me each day;
Although a smile my feelings shroud,
My heart is sad and gray.

I look me back upon the years
When life seemed joyous, bright,
And pray to God with anguished tears,
To take me home tonight.

Perhaps when life's turmoil is past
And spirits leave the clay,
We will be reconciled at last,
And joy will fill each day.

Then with my early choice of life,
With children by her side—
Forgetting worldly hate and strife,
We may in love abide.

ROOM FOR ME

They say in God's house there's room for me,
And always there will a welcome be;
All furnished in white, where angels dwell,
And glory to God. the story tell.
That the rooms all bright with love's sweet tone,
Are tempered with joy from God's own throne.
That naught there is dark, for He is light—
His glory so great, makes heaven bright.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

That all there is joy, and angels sing
A message of peace, good tidings bring.
That 'round His white throne the harps resound,
And melody sweet doth there abound.
That gathered are saints, whose faces light
Reflects from God, a glorious sight.
That great angel throngs float in the air,
With heavenly forms—wondrously fair.
That all's so content in that dear home,
No wandering sheep from it will roam.
That pastures are sweet in his domain—
There's no weary feet, no sigh, no pain.
That waters serene do gently flow,
All sparkling with sheen and heavenly glow.
That on the green banks, with shade above,
Swell voices of thanks for His great love.
Oh, then if it's true, there's room for me,
New life I'll pursue with jubilee.
I'll kneel at His throne both morn and night,
Until He says, "Come soul, take thy flight."

I NEVER THOUGHT OF DEATH

In youth I never thought of death,
It seemed so far away;
Nor of a time when, void of breath,
They'd lay me in the clay.
But now, as twilight draweth near,
Death's shadow seems to fall
Across my pathway, and I hear
The spirits softly call.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Like soft sweet chimings of a bell,
That calls to evening prayer,
Their voices ever seem to tell
Of rest from toil and care.
Then, with an angel for my guide,
I'll cross the silv'ry strand,
And there, with loved ones by my side,
Dwell in the heav'nly land.

IF YOU ESTEEM ME

If you esteem me as you say,
Place flowers on their graves;
My heart turns to them every day,
And for them ever craves.

I picture desolation there,
Without a single bloom;
No loved one near to tend or care,
Or brighten up the gloom.

If one rose bush was placed between
The two forms lying there,
To blossom in the spring, I ween
'Twould make the spot more fair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And if each mound with pinks was bound,
Their brilliant colors rare
Would spread around upon the ground—
A beauty sweet and fair.

Then clean the spot around their lot
And make it fair to view;
Place at each head a flower pot,
As I would do for you.

A WEE LITTLE FLOWER

A wee little flower
By the side of a road,
Refreshed by the shower
Of a dewdrop, abode
In a shady bower,
Just thistles above;
But never an hour
Did it suffer for love.

God made the wee flower,
With a beauty so rare;
He gave angels power
To guard it with care.
And every sweet moment
The wee flower grew,
Its blood was a-foment
And tinting with blue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Maturing in beauty
The wee flower grew,
Attentive to duty—
A lesson to you.
Content by the wayside
In sweet virtue's ways,
With God for its guide,
It lived all its days.

Now, Lydia:

May you ever be true
And content with your lot,
Though possessions be few
And your home but a cot.
May your heart be a home
For sweet love to dwell in—
Not a thought that will roam
Into paths of old sin.

IN MY LADY'S GARDEN

In my lady's garden,
Many roses blow,
Seeking, ever seeking,
The secret of her glow.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Cheeks are red with blushes,
Like a golden sky;
Rose, though red with flushes,
Cannot with them vie.

Soft the rose's petals,
Softer still her cheek,
Though the rose has beauty,
Her presence makes them meek.

Golden glow of evening
Tints her lovely face;
Though the rose has sheening,
Still they have not her grace.

Drop your head, oh, roses!
Drop your head and die—
For my lady passes,
And you cannot with her vie.

OH, DESTINY, THOU BREATH OF GOD

Oh, destiny, thou breath of God!
What mystery so great?
Thou rulest us with chast'ning rod,
And we cannot escape.
From dust we came—to dust return—
And thus ends human hope,
Yet mortal heart doth ever yearn
And for immortal grope.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The light of God's but dimly seen
By mortals here below,
Yet ever try to pierce the screen,
That hope may brighter glow.
The body must return to dust,
Forever to remain;
But what becomes of life is just
What we can ne'er explain.

Unchangeable are nature's laws,
And these laws govern all;
Old destiny, with eagle claws,
Securely doth enthrall.
We can't escape from destined way—
Our lives were foreordained;
Though we may ever weep and pray,
The law is still maintained.

The life that leaves the melting frame
May have another law,
Where, free from earthly lust and shame,
Be able to withdraw,
And choose a pathway of its own
In spirit world above—
That may, some day, lead to a throne
Of Godly peace and love.

But laws that govern human-kind
Are never changed below;
To all the future we are blind,
And fate we never know.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

We come into this world unsought
And breathe a few brief hours;
When scarcely is our life's work wrought,
We droop and fall like flowers.

TREAD SOFTLY, SHE'S DYING

Tread softly, she's dying—
Dying alone—
Reaping the harvest
Of sin she has sown.
Speak to her kindly
In whisper's low tone—
See! she is crying
That mercy be shown.

In this poor hovel
She lies here, unknown—
Soon in a pauper's
Grave she will be thrown.
None of her people
But what would disown—
For fallen is she
From fair virtue's throne.

If 'twas her brother,
He'd not be alone—
Friends to his bedside
Long since would have flown.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

But 'twas the sister
By sin overthrown—
Never since that day
Has kindness been shown.

Speak to her gently,
For now she'd atone!
Pray, for she begs
With a deep, anguished groan,
She humbly seeks pardon
With a sob and a moan—
Begs you in mercy
Her sins to condone.

Speak to her kindly
And she'll cease to moan;
Perhaps from her eyes
A smile may be shown.
Lead her to dream
Of a happier zone,
Then she'll pass out
Without murmur or groan.

Pray she may some day
Reach heaven's white throne,
Where all is forgiven
And kindness is shown;
Where in God's judgment
No difference is shown
To male or female—
Where sex is unknown.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

YE HILLS AND DALES

Ye hills and dales and valleys green,
Ye mountains lofty heights,
Ye glens and meadows in between,
'Midst nature's wondrous sights;
My heart with rapture upward wings
And throbs with joy's delights,
While heavenly music inward rings,
And soul takes upward flights.

Ye mossy dells, where ever dwells
A rhythmic murmur low,
Like chiming bells that softly tells
Where waters sweetly flow,
Ye fill my heart with godly love
And pleasure here below,
Like olive leaf in mouth of dove,
Caused Noah's heart to glow.

Ye silent nooks and singing brooks,
Ye rippling little rills,
Ye streams that flow in twist and crooks
And fill my heart with thrills,
Ye little know the ardent glow
That all my being fills,
As down the mountain sides you flow,
To feed the many mills.

Ye mountain peaks that silent speaks,
Ye vales so far below,
Sometimes in freaks, all beauty streaks
Ye with a golden glow.



"Ye hills and dales and valleys green,
Ye mountains lofty heights."



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

' Ye mountain pine, in the sunshine,
You, distant beauty show,
While tangled vine doth intertwine
Around your trunk below.

I love each scene in nature green,
I love the woods and streams;
I love to wander all serene
And dream sweet fairy dreams.
I love each hill and mountain rill,
The moonlight and sunbeams,
The silence still, that heart doth thrill,
Amidst old nature's schemes.

WAITING FOR THE CALL

I'm simply waiting for the call
Of loved ones gone before;
There's not one now that's left of all—
They're on the other shore.

They left me many years ago
To journey all alone;
And grief has made my head like snow,
And oft I sigh and moan.

My trembling form is bent with age,
My lamp is out of oil;
I've entered on my life's last stage—
I'll soon be freed from toil.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

My spirit soon will take its flight—
It may be midnight's call
When God shall say, soul, come tonight,
And then, farewell to all.

Though soul may tremble with appall
As upward I ascend,
I'll try through faith to trust it all,
And with His spirit blend.

And when at last I reach His throne
And find my loved ones there,
I'll thank the Lord for mercies shown,
In heartfelt praise and prayer.

WHEN FRIENDS OF YOUTH

When friends of youth have passed away
And left you all alone,
You wander lonesome, day by day,
And often sigh and moan.
The world, all selfish, pass you by
And seek for pleasure gay,
No time or care for sob or sigh,
Nor for the a-ged gray.

You live a life of retrospect—
They, in prospective joy.
The dead old past they all reject
And a-ged thoughts annoy.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The buoyant blood of ardent youth,
Like swelling buds of spring,
Leave age behind without a ruth—
Pass on with eagle wing.

Age finds sweet pleasure in the past—
In plucking withered leaves,
In wandering in garden vast,
Where mem'ry backward weaves;
In dreaming of the days of yore
When youthful hopes were bright,
And of the loved ones gone before
To heaven's immortal light.

Ah, lonely is each passing day,
And how the heart doth yearn
To wrench the spirit from the clay
And a new life discern.
To leave this world of strife and tears
And in new regions roam,
With friends we loved in early years—
In God's own heavenly home.

DON'T FORGET TO READ YOUR BIBLE

Don't forget to read your Bible, boy,
While out upon the road;
It will give your dear old mother joy
And lift a heavy load.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Read the place that she has marked for you,
And heed the message there;
It will make your heart more nobly true,
And keep you from despair.

Read the Proverbs filled with good advice,
Apply them to your life;
Keep your thoughts upon sweet paradise,
Forgetting sin and strife.
Read the prophet's message, good and clear,
About God's only Son;
Keep your body clean and heart sincere
And He will say, well done.

Read the Psalms for consolation sweet
For comfort that will last,
They will tend to make your joy complete
And you'll forget the past.
Let your mind dwell on the cleanly things
While mixing with the world,
Let your soul float out on heav'nly wings,
Christ's banner keep unfurled.

Let your heart be filled with charity
For all your fellowman,
And remember them upon your knee
And help them all you can.
If you'll heed the words that's written here,
While dwelling on this earth,
You will fill poor grieving hearts with cheer
And prove yourself of worth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHAT DOST THINE EYES SEE?

Poet, what dost thine eyes see,
Gazing out so earnestly?
When I follow with my gaze,
Blazing sunshine doth but daze!
Every day I see the same
Efforts made for wealth and fame,
Though a wealth of beauty lie
At our feet, we pass them by;
Yet in melody thy voice
Ever seemeth to rejoice,
Seeing beauty all around
Everywhere in nature's bound.

Poet of the woods and fields,
In abandon thy heart yields
To the call of nature dear
Every season of the year.
Though the leaves are sere and brown,
From the tree tops falling down,
Still thine eyes doth only see
Traces left of spring's beauty.
Is not what thine eyes behold,
Autumn's season turned to gold,
Purple here and yellow there—
Dead, yet beautiful and fair?

Poet, like immortal hope,
Think you that these dead leaves grope
For another season yet,
Where life's sap is ever wet,
Where the green doth ever wave,
Freshened by the dews that lave?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Or unconscious of their fate,
Molder into other state,
Springing up from mellow ground
With new beauty to astound—
Ever changing, living on
Till doth end creation's dawn?

Poet, tell me, tell me true,
What you see in skies of blue?
Do you view immortal life
Far away from mortal strife?
Can the finite vision see
Into God's eternity?
Or must we in darkness grope
With no light to cheer our hope,
Reaching here and reaching there,
Trembling hearts filled with despair,
Ever stumbling on the way,
Till doth come the Judgment Day?

Poet, I would fain to know
All this mystery below;
Why man should immortal be,
From God's anger ever flee?
Could a sin within me flow
E'en before I knew life's glow?
Must I suffer grief and pain
For the crime of brother Cain?
Is it just that I should be
Held for this eternally?
Has not God some greater plan
That will help poor fallen man?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Poet, what is life to man
That he should so earnest plan
Future years of joyous hope
With the foe, grim death, to cope?
See you youth as well as age
Fall before old grim death's rage?
Nothing's certain here on earth,
Death begins the day of birth!
Yet he ever drives and slaves,
Earthly things he ever craves
Though he may attain life's span,
Three score ten doth end the man.

Poet, if immortal life
Frees us from all pain and strife,
Dwelling in a higher zone,
Where no grief or care is known,
Why should man so dread the day
When the soul departs the clay?
Hast thou seen the face of woe
Of a soul that feared to go?
How the trembling, craven clod
Feared to meet the unknown God?
If of truth he could but know,
'Stead of fear, would his heart glow?

Poet, tell me of the soul!
What influence doth control;
If not He who rules the world,
Who, old sinful Satan hurled
Down from heaven's high estate,
Here on earth to foment hate?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When it leaves the frame of clay,
What become of it, I pray?
Does it journey to the west,
Ever seeking blessed rest?
Or to east, where sun doth rise,
Ever flashing to the skies?

Poet, is its haven there,
Floating in the ether air?
Or must it be ever on
Till eternity shall dawn?
Is there ne'er a resting place,
Or must still it onward race?
Does it wander all alone
In that vast and endless zone?
Or does other spirits there
Point the way with love and care,
And encourage with a song,
As they journey all along?

Poet, life's a mystery,
Borne out by man's history;
Endless chains in brain doth weave,
Mighty things he doth achieve.
Yet a few brief years doth lay
His weak frame in melting clay.
Does his greatness still aspire
Upward from his bed of mire?
Does his intellect or thought
Perfect things on earth not wrought?
Or unconscious breathless lie
While eternal ages fly?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Poet, though he may not know
Even simple things below,
And this life may often seem
Like a misty, phantom dream,
Yet sweet hope doth e'er impart
Consolation to the heart.
Then we hear the song birds sing,
And the soul doth upward wing,
Soaring high with pinions spread
All exulting overhead,
To a land of golden glow,
Where sweet waters ever flow.

Poet, the great mystery,
Veiled from all humanity,
Fills my heart with great amaze,
Leaves me groping in a daze;
Yet when gazing with thine eyes,
Beauty of both earth and skies
Throbs my heart with such delight,
Soul seems taking upward flight.
And I doubt me not at all
That it is some higher call,
Coming from a throne above,
Filled with an eternal love.

A PRAYER

We approach Thy presence, Lord,
Trusting in Thy promised word;
Kneeling here at mercy's throne,
All our wants to Thee are known.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

In the Book that's for our guide,
Thou hast said what e'er betide,
What we'd ask in faith and love
Would be granted from above.

Now incline Thine ear, we pray,
Grant our wishes, Lord, today;
Hard and grievous are our cares,
Mingled tears are with our prayers.

Ah, the road is rough and steep,
Oft with weary hearts we weep,
For the heavy burdens bear
And our frames sink with despair.

Day by day we plod along,
Sometimes cheered by hope's sweet song,
But more often feel the prod
Of misfortune's hated rod.

Then our cup is filled with tears,
Mingled with suspense and fears,
While our hands are closely prest
'Gainst an aching, throbbing breast.

Pain to body soon is past,
Mental anguish oft doth last;
Fend us from the last, we pray,
For the first ends with the day.

But the anguish of the mind,
No solace for it we find;
But like cup of bitter tears,
Recalls past and sinful years.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Ah, the corpse of other years,
How they fill our hearts with fears!
Though we lock the closet tight,
Yet they fill our souls with fright.

And in private, if by chance,
Backward in our hearts we glance,
See the spectre standing there—
Ah, it fills us with despair.

We can hide from all but Thee,
Hide past years of misery;
But to self and Thee is known
All the sins that we have sown.

Help us to forget the past,
Help it from our minds to cast—
Root it up and throw it out,
Then with joy we'll sing and shout.

RESENTMENT

In looking back the bitter years
Since you and I were wed,
And thinking of the flood of tears
That I so often shed—
I would not live the life again
That you condemned me to,
That caused me so much shame and pain,
And other things to rue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I gave my girlhood love to you—
I gave my very all,
And thought that you were good and true,
So god-like and so tall!
I trusted in your promise fair
That you'd be true to me;
That I'd receive both love and care,
And happiness, from thee.

Ah, bitter has been all the years
That once seemed bright and fair,
And agonizing were the tears
I shed in my despair.
Like leaves that drop to autumn's call—
All dead, no living breath—
My heart has turned to bitter gall,
By you, it met its death.

I'M THINKING OF YEARS

I'm thinking of years that have gone,
Of many dear friends that I knew,
In days of sweet youth's early dawn,
Whose heartbeats were loving and true.

'Midst rustic scenes, where I once played,
Where rustling leaves swayed to the breeze,
I often met with a sweet maid,
As fair as spring blossoms on trees.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Fond memory over me waves
As backward I glance o'er time's sea,
And deeply my heart ever craves
Her presence one moment with me.

Her eyes were like violets blue,
Her cheeks like the full blushing rose,
Her breath like the fresh morning dew,
When buds and sweet blossoms uncloze.

They buried her 'neath the green trees,
And song birds are nesting above;
Their voice in the sweet balmy breeze
Are chanting a requiem of love.

Ah, when I look back on the past
And see the dead hopes lying there,
My soul in affright stands aghast—
For once they were blooming and fair.

MOCKING BIRD

Hail to thee, oh, mocking bird,
Sweetest singer ever heard,
Mocking every bird you meet,
Imitating them complete;
Gushing forth a song of praise,
Filling us with sweet amaze;
There's no songster can compete
With your melody so sweet.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Caroling your lovely lay
From the morn till close of day,
And at night, when moonbeams peep,
Lulling us to restful sleep,
How thy soft sweet tones do calm,
Listening to thy soft sweet psalm.
Like an angel 'gaged in prayer,
Thy sweet voice our hearts ensnare.

And when filled with love's romance,
Thou, sweet bird, our souls entrance.
Nightingale cannot compare
To thy saucy, mocking air;
Emperor and czar and king,
Thou art all when thou dost sing;
Nothing that on wings doth fly,
Can with thee in music vie.

When the dogwoods are in bloom
And the birds, with song and plume,
Mate, and build their nest on tree,
Though they fill us with their glee,
Yet 'tis not like thy sweet song
Floating on the breeze along;
And we're sure you mortify
All the songsters flitting by.

COME, GWENDOLINE

Come, Gwendoline, and go with me;
We'll sit beneath the old oak tree
Where first we met and plighted love.
And swore our troth by all above.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Again we'll dream of our sweet youth,
When life seemed full of joy and truth,
And every day eternal spring
And buds and blossoms seemed to sing.

The music of the brooklet's stream
Will add to pleasure of the dream;
And as the waters gently flow
We'll feel again youth's ardent glow.

We'll listen to sweet nature's song,
'Midst wildwood scenes forget all wrong.
We'll pluck wild flowers and green fern,
And let sweet mem'ry backward turn.

Ah, me, we're bent with many years,
Seen blasted hopes and bitter tears;
Seen disillusion of our dream—
Seen loss of friendships and esteem.

We'll forget days forever gone
And see new birthed a brighter dawn,
Forgetting for a moment brief
The cares of life, its pain and grief.

Then come with me, dear Gwendoline,
Back to our youth's field, just to glean
One grain of fruit left standing there
And store it in our hearts with care.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

TO MAGGIE

Could I but lean this aching heart
'Gainst that sweet heart of thine,
Its throbbing pain would all depart,
And heaven's joy'd be mine.

Wouldst thy lips yield me but one kiss,
One kiss with soft sweet sigh,
'Twould fill my very soul with bliss,
And fevered ecstasy.

If in thine eyes I could but trace
One timid spark of love,
And see love's blush spread o'er thy face,
'Twould lift my soul above.

Then give to me one moment's bliss—
An embrace with a sigh—
The ecstasy of one sweet kiss,
And then—just let me die.

HELEN ADAM KELLER (Blind, Deaf and Dumb)

Moving in a world of darkness,
Soul so full of grateful love!
How we, in our selfish sharpness,
Smite ourselves in self reprove.
Could we penetrate the shadow
Of the paths that thy feet tread,

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

See the beauties of the meadow
Where thy lovely flowers spread,
All this world, with human kindness
Would some loving deed express,
For all selfish human blindness
Would be changed to hearts that bless.

Oh, the sacred hidden beauties
Thy dark eyes alone doth see,
With a heart to fulfill duties
On a dark and starless sea,
Must be heav'nly in their glory,
Hid from all the world but thee,
For we only hear the story
As thy darkened eyes doth see.
Then, if listen'ing to the story
Brings to us a sweet new light,
From dark paths so full of glory,
What must it be to thine own sight?

CONTEMPT

May I deep contempt ever keep
For puerile minds that snarl and creep
With hateful malice in their heart,
For those who choose the nobler part
Of life—whose intellects are well
Above them, like heaven from hell.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Poor, slimy, little weazened mind,
'Tis strange indeed that God, so kind,
Should find a place on earth for you.
For when we get an inward view
Of all the little things that brew
In such a mind, it makes us spew.

Go, worm; go hide away with care,
You only poison God's pure air;
The scent upon you is so foul
It brings upon one's face a scowl;
Go live away from men of worth
Until good thoughts you can give birth.

But if your mind remains still shrunk,
Adopt a comrade from a skunk;
'Twould prove congenial to your soul,
And both could live in the same hole;
Then you could live on all that's foul—
A rat, a lizard, or an owl.

But as the two of you will blend,
Don't bring your odor to offend
Us, with that awful nasty smell,
'Twould drive us to the brink of hell!
And sure we'd rather be there, too,
Than 'sociate with such as you.

RESULT OF ANCIENT WRONGS

The wrongs imposed by potentates,
By emperors and tzars,
Has caused old Europe's many states
To shake with cannon jars.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

They lie now helpless in the dust,
While chaos reigns supreme,
And hopeless, crave for just one crust,
That they might life redeem.

It is ordained the innocent
Must sometimes suffer, too;
And oft their very souls are rent
For what the guilty do.
With careless thought they passed wrong up,
Bowed down to a false god,
Until at last the bitter cup,
God's sure and chast'ning rod.

The blood-stained land is bleeding now,
The people in despair,
Upon their knees most humbly bow
In supplicating prayer.
If He who heeds the sparrow's fall
Doth gently stir your heart,
You'll listen to their anguished call
And gladly do your part.

Let's lift them up with hope's sweet cheer
And help them all we can;
Remove their sorrow and their fear,
And help them future plan.
Oh, let your heart with love expand
And lift these poor ones up;
Extend to them a helping hand,
Remove the bitter cup.

FOUR SEASONS

Autumn, winter, spring and summer—
Each one has its tear;
Though in spring some joys we number,
Winter's cold and drear.
In the autumn leaves are falling,
Cover all the ground,
Bringing to us thoughts appalling,
Solemn and profound.

Summer, with the full blown roses,
Radiant and fair,
To the human heart discloses
God's great love and care.
In the autumn, birds are leaving
For a warmer clime,
And full many hearts are grieving
For their songs sublime.

In the winter, cold breeze blowing,
Freezes to the bone;
Sun is dimmed, and often snowing,
Makes you shake and moan.
But in spring, when buds are swelling,
And you venture out,
It just seems with God you're dwelling,
And you sing and shout.

Every season has its pleasure,
Also has its tear;
There's no joy without a measure
Of a little fear.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WHEN LEAVES ARE TURNING

When leaves are turning sere and brown
And autumn winds are blowing,
And one by one all tumbling down,
Just like the trees were snowing,
I love to wander 'midst the scene
Of nature all a-changing,
And of the autumn's harvest glean
Gold leaves for crown arranging.

It takes me back to early days,
"The days of school vacation,"
When boys and girls of happy ways,
"The future of the nation,"
Just made old nature's woods to ring
With shouts of animation.
As with oak leaves they crowned a king,
Then queen, to fit his station.

I love to take the golden leaves
To deck sweet mem'ry's bower;
I love to, when my spirit grieves,
Gaze at them by the hour;
For when my thoughts go back the years,
With memory all churning,
My eyes are filled with heartfelt tears.
And turns to them with yearning.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

FINIS

I leave you all now, and gracefully bow,
I hope that the book will give pleasure;
That no frowning brow, the reading will endow,
But that you may find some sweet treasure.
They're but simple rhymes, composed in spare times,
And some of them without true measure;
Great truths you will find quite oft interlined,
You may trace them out at your leisure.

J. M. HICKMAN,
Earle, Arkansas.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

BOOK II



PUBLISHED 1922



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

EARLE HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Boys and Girls:

When in my last unconscious sleep
I rest beneath the sod,
Should disappointments o'er you sweep
And faith be lost in God—
'Twould please me well if you would ask,
What was the author's creed—
When faint and weary with life's task,
He felt the most in need?

I'd say, he could not always see
The wisdom of his God—
When he was filled with misery,
Caused by misfortune's rod,
Yet something seemed to draw him near,
In darkest hours of gloom—
To the great God for love and cheer,
And then his heart would bloom.

TO THE MASONS OF VICKSBURG, MISS.

Oh, think of me kindly while I am away,
Remember, in spirit I'm with thee each day;
The sound of the gavel will reach to my ear,
And many dear voices in dreams I will hear.

The warm heart's expression conveyed in the grasp,
Stirs tender emotions as brothers' hands clasp;
No Judas amongst us, no kiss to betray,
We kneel at the altar as brothers, to pray.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

May fond recollection recalling my face,
In each heart's affection find loving embrace;
And when I return, just to meet you once more—
May I find a sweet welcome awaiting in store.

COME, WANDER IN THE FRAGRANT DEW

In evening's twilight solitude—
When sitting all alone—
Should some past mem'ry stir your mood
And make you sigh and moan—
Remember this, I've suffered, too,
And know just how you feel—
And truly sympathize with you,
As songs within reveal.

Then open up these pages, friend,
And read the lines with care;
You'll find some loving thought to blend
That may cure your despair:
I know you'll find a thought or two
To dissipate the gloom—
Come, wander in the fragrant dew,
Where many flowers bloom.

DEAR READER

If in an hour of cheerless grief
You come for comfort here,
And in these pages find relief
To give you hope and cheer—
My heart will throb with gratitude,
And soar to heaven above;
Because some song has done you good—
And cured your grief with love.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

IF IN THIS WORLD

If in this world of grief and tears
One song of mine inspires,
And fills with hope the future years
For all your heart desires—
Oh, what a joy 'twould be to me
When I am old and gray—
Just to receive a word from thee
To cheer me on my way.

TO MY GRAND CHILDREN

Oh, my babies, how I miss you!
Miss you more than words can tell;
I would like to have you with me
In some lovely flower dell,
There—with naught to pain or worry—
I would like, the livelong day—
Just to see your sweet young faces
Light up with the joy of play.

ALAS! I CANNOT

Alas! I cannot trace the beams
That sparkle in each eye,
Like summer's lightning chastened gleams
Upon an evening's sky;
The soulful beauty of each glance—
With melting liquid, rare—
Doth pulsing heart throbs each entrance,
And all my thoughts ensnare.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

IMPULSE

The impulse of each human heart
Is like a lightning dash,
That quickly strikes with stinging dart,
Then melts with its own flash.

ONE TENDER GLANCE

One tender glance from loved one's eye,
One glist'ning tear—one soft sweet sigh—
Will melt the hardest heart of stone,
And love will mingle with its tone.

KING BABY

All truly great and noble minds—
In simple things true pleasures find.
The infant lips—the tiny hands—
Rule kings and nobles in all lands.

The prattle of one wee small child
Will make the brute or savage mild;
The gurgling laugh—the baby smile—
Will all true noble hearts beguile.

IF I COULD ONLY BE

If I could only be at ease,
And do the things that I would please,
I'd move to some sweet sylvan spot,
Where I in peace might pass my lot—
And dream and muse, and write sweet things,
And do my best to heal heart stings.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

MY HEADSTONE

No marble white, all polished bright,
 May mark my cold damp bed;
It may be vine to intertwine
 O'er my unconscious head.

But if birds sing each coming spring,
 Their songs of praise to God—
Just o'er the mound where I am found,
 'Twill glorify the sod.

If pale moonbeams with softening gleams
 Will o'er me gently glow;
I'll sweetly rest—by them caressed—
 While balmy breezes blow.

Then while all's still, like flowing rill,
 I'll murmur a sweet song—
To float above in rhythmic love,
 That each breeze may prolong.

HAD I THE GIFT OF MELODY

Had I the gift of melody
 To sing the songs I hear—
In every leafy swaying tree
 And all of nature dear—
I'd fling my voice upon the breeze
 That it might wafted be—
To lonely spirits ill at ease
 And fill them with sweet glee.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I'd mind them o' the birds o' spring
As on the wings they fly,
And to dear God so sweetly sing
While soaring in the sky.
I'd make each gushing note to swell
Until they would aspire—
To lift their souls where God doth dwell,
With the angelic choir.

I'd murmur soft, the low sweet song
Of rippling streams that flow,
And let the balmy breeze prolong
Each rhythmic murmur low.
I'd let the zephyrs tune my lute
And sigh with each soft breeze—
With dreamy faeries blow my flute,
And mock the swaying trees.

Majestic ocean's song I'd sing—
With all its thund'rous roar—
When storms—the mighty billows fling—
Upon its beaten shore.
The shrieking wind—the lightning crash—
The troubled water's cry—
I'd imitate each flash and dash,
And every sob and sigh.

I'd sing the song of rains that fall—
The melting, sighing sound—
In notes that would all souls enthral,
With music to astound.
The rocks and rills—the vales and hills—
The mountain's lofty height—
I'd sing to fill all hearts with thrills
Of pleasure and delight.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I'd sing each sound in nature's bound,
Yea, many anthems raise—
With melody that would astound,
And cause all hearts to praise.
I'd softly croon a rhythmic tune
To soothe each soul with love;
My harp I'd tune both morn and noon—
To lift all hearts above.

FATE HATH ORDAINED

Fate hath ordained that Mother Earth
Will some day claim my frame;
My melting form in a new birth,
May cause a rose to flame.

The beauty of my thoughts may flow,
And mingle with the soil—
And mix with some sweet flower's glow
As upward it doth toil.

A maid may pluck me from the stem,
And place me in her hair,
To use me as a diadem—
Her heart's choice to ensnare.

A mother's hand with tender care
May place me on a grave—
Of some dear loved one lying there—
Her soldier son, so brave.

Then let my thoughts with beauty glow,
And each day give new birth—
That flowers from my soil may blow,
With all of beauty's worth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

IN DREAMS

In phantom dreams, there often beams
A wondrous vision near—
That simply teems with love's sweet gleams,
That never had a peer.

Like crystal stream in nature's scheme,
A music soft and low—
Doth ever seem with love supreme,
When she is near, to flow.

The music sweet that doth repeat
Each murmur in the dream—
Like waving wheat that zephyrs meet—
Fills me with joy supreme.

She comes with love and bends above,
And softly strokes my hair;
Like Noah's dove—she coos with love—
And croons a soft sweet air.

And as she sings, soul upward wings
And floats above the sky;
Like a bell that rings soft chimes, she brings
A joyous ecstasy!

For as she bends, my spirit blends,
And all my joy's complete;
Sorrow suspends, beauty transcends—
And love then reigns replete.



“Upon the wall above me—
A picture sweet and fair—”

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, lovely theme! My sweetest dream!
My angel mother, fair!
E'en in a dream thou art supreme—
And without a compare.

'Twas MIDNIGHT

'Twas midnight's solemn hour—
My light was burning low—
I sat me silent musing,
Before my firelight's glow;
Upon the wall above me—
A picture sweet and fair—
Seemed smiling with a welcome,
Upon me, sitting there.

And as I gazed with longing,
I seemed to hear a voice
From out the past, speak softly—
Oh, loving heart rejoice.
In spirit I am with thee,
To guard thy feet aright—
And hover 'bout thy bedside,
To cheer thee through the night.

I know the lonesome aching—
The void that fills each day—
The clouds that hide the sunshine—
And note each strand of gray.
'Tis but a fleeting moment—
This sand of earthly life—
Then spirit, freed from earth pot,
Will dwell 'midst beauty rife.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, faithful heart be cheerful,
For I am ever near
In spirit, both to comfort
And fill with loving cheer.
I'm waiting by the wayside
In spirit world above,
And soon will come the twilight,
When you'll join me, my love.

Then ever reunited,
Our souls will sweetly glow—
Where crystal streams of water,
From heavenly fountains flow.
Oh, faithful heart be cheerful
Until that blessed day;
Remember I am waiting,
To guide thee on the way.

EVENING SHADOWS

Often when the evening's shadow
Spreads o'er all a soft'ning glow—
And the treetops and the meadow
Whisper as the breezes blow—
Silently my footsteps wander,
Where the crystal streamlets flow—
There to dream, and muse, and ponder—
Thoughts all drifting to and fro.

In the western sky, soft gleaming,
Oft there lingers a sweet glow—
With a golden color beaming
Like a beautiful rainbow:

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Faintly, whippoorwill note dying
As the twilight fades away—
On the breezes—softly sighing—
Recalls scenes of yesterday.

Sweetly sounds the trickling water
As it courses to the sea;
On the banks, my footsteps loiter—
List'ning to its melody.
Crickets all around are chirping
'Midst the dank and moldered leaves;
Busy spider—space usurping—
Spins his silken thread and weaves.

Many sounds in nature ringing—
As the twilight disappears—
With a buzzy kind of singing—
Reaches to my welcome ears.
Hark! The mocking bird—low trilling—
Sings the moon a grateful hymn—
With a lullaby all thrilling—
As he sways upon a limb.

Silent, with a heart uplifted,
Speeds a prayer to God above—
For these little birds—so gifted—
Seemingly so full of love.
Heart and soul with nature blending—
Drinking in the sweet incense;
All its beauty freely lending—
For my grief, a recompense.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

BUT FEW HAVE GIFT

But few have gift of tongue to tell
The feelings of the heart—
The lovely thoughts that inward dwell,
Its beauties to impart—
Yet as each thought on breeze is flung
To float on ether tide—
Though crude in style, it will be sung—
And in some heart abide.

Let those who love the pricking thorn
Dwell on the desert plain;
Where only cactus doth adorn—
Whose slightest touch is pain—
There let them joy to heart's content
With dust to dim the eye,
Until, all blinded, soul is blent
With all the arid dry.

Though poor and humble be the song—
I'll strive to catch one strain
Of melody, to pass along,
And sing it once again.
The mocking bird doth but repeat
From his sweet gushing throat—
Each song he hears full and complete—
From birds of single note.

From high to low this bird doth sing,
And trills sweet melody;
And though he makes the welkin ring,
'Tis but a borrowed glee.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Then let me kind encouragement,
Give to the humble bard;
And with a loving heart comment—
And critic's scorn discard.

THE BIRDS ALL SIT

The birds all sit with drooping wings
Upon the leafless trees;
The storm with bitter icy stings—
Each little foot doth freeze.

The dreary sound of wind and rain,
Is carried in the air,
And fills with melancholy's pain,
And hopeless sad despair.

Oft in the spring, 'midst waving rush,
These little birds I've heard—
Just trill and sing on tree and bush,
Until my soul was stirred.

Now while the wind doth sigh and sweep,
And down comes sleet and hail—
Within my room I kneel and weep,
And their sad fate bewail.

When summer comes and blossoms blow,
And balmy is the air—
Again these birds, with hearts aglow—
Will trill with music rare.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Again they'll build on bush and limb,
And raise their nestlings there;
With grateful hearts they'll raise a hymn,
That will my soul ensnare.

Oh, God above Who rules with love,
Look down on them tonight—
The wren and sparrow, jay and dove,
And pity their sad plight.

Temper the wind, Creative Mind,
For all things heed Thy word;
And in Thy mercy kindly find
A haven for each bird.

RED ROSES AND WHITE ROSES

The red for the living,
The white for the dead,
We'll crown with sweet roses
Each loved one's dear head.

The full blushing red rose,
Like mother's sweet face—
We'll place o'er the full heart,
With loving embrace;
And through the pure white rose,
Fond mem'ry will trace—
Each feature of mother's
Dear sweet loving face.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

We thank thee, dear red rose,
That mother is here,
To watch fondly o'er us—
To comfort and cheer;
We plead that her presence
Be left years to bless—
To comfort in troubles—
To love and caress.

We pluck the pure white rose,
Then kiss it and sigh,
And yearn for the meeting
In the sweet by and by,
When mother shall greet us,
On that blessed shore—
Where parting and sorrow,
Shall be never more.

The red for the living,
The white for the dead—
We'll crown with sweet roses,
Each loved one's dear head.

COULD I BUT SAY

Could I but say I've done my best,
When my last sun has set;
That measured by the square's true test
I'd have no need to fret;
I'd sleep in peace when the last beam
Of sunshine in the west—
With all its softened golden gleam—
Had sunk unto its rest.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Could I but say each stone was square,
And fit into the space,
Left by the master, "HIRAM," there—
Each fitting in its place—
And as the temple stood complete—
A monument to love—
And saw the stones I squared fit neat—
'Twould lift my soul above.

Could I but say I drew no pay
Except for honest work,
But labored faithful, day by day—
Though wearied, did not shirk—
I'd welcome the soft twilight eve
When last I laid me down,
Without a darkened thought to grieve—
Or fear to mar my crown.

I pray the level, square and plumb,
May prove my work well done;
That I may get encomium
From HIRAM, "*Widow's Son*"—
So, when at last I lay aside
My working tools on earth—
I may with HIRAM then abide,
Because of proven worth.

A FROZEN BIRD

Poor little birdie once so fair,
Thou has succumbed to winter's air.
Last night in damp cold misery—
Thy shelter but a leafless tree—
Cold winter's blast—with snow and sleet—
Chilled thy poor frame from head to feet.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Thou liest here stretched out full low,
Without a spark of life's sweet glow.

Oft when the buds were fresh with dew,
I've silent stood—entranced by you—
And listened to thy wild sweet note,
That warbled sweetly from thy throat,
But now, thou liest stiff in death—
Forever gone is living breath:

No tears are shed o'er thy poor bier,
No kindred of thy kind draws near,
But all alone—without a friend—
Grim death was faced unto the end:

When flowers bloom again in June,
I'll miss the music of thy tune,
And lonely wander in the wood,
Bowed down by melancholy's mood;
And though all nature may bloom fair,
I'll miss thee floating in the air.

No longer nestlings in the tree
Will fill thy mother heart with glee:
No longer, mating in the spring,
Will mate of thine so sweetly sing,
But here, uncovered, lie and rot,
Where feet may tramp thee on the spot.

Alas! Poor bird! I'll shed a tear—
And leave thy dead form lying here;
Perhaps God has, in tender love,
Prepared for thee a home above,
Where all are sheltered from each blast,
And tender mercies ever last.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

REMORSE

There comes a time when we regret the past;
 Regret the follies and mistakes of life;
The errors of our youth oft times doth last—
 Until old age, our forms with mortal strife
Doth bend, and we are filled with sad remorse;
 Remorse so deep, that anguish oft doth blend;
And how pleased we'd be, our minds to divorce
 From it, when on our knees prayers ascend.
The sad look of pain from those we offend,
 Oft go with us through life—until the end—
And in sorrow, how oft doth conscience smote
 Us with what we've done, as their pain we note.

THERE IS A BOY

There is a boy I've not yet seen—
 Three hundred miles away—
My heart would leap with joy, I ween,
 To see his face this day:

To romp with him upon the green
 Would fill my soul with joy;
I'd do some capers seldom seen,
 To humor that sweet boy.

I'd crawl with him upon the floor
 And let him ride my back;
I'd give him all my precious store,
 Though he might break and crack.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I'd let that boy full freedom take,
Though he might much destroy—
And let him yell and much noise make,
The neighbors to annoy.

I would not care what they might say,
Nor would I care for slight;
I'd find my comfort every day,
In giving him delight.

Each night I'd take him on my knees,
And in my arms enfold,
While to my breast I'd loving squeeze,
Like miser would his gold.

I'd play with all his little toes,
And pinch his little ears;
I'd kiss his eyes, his hair, his nose—
And wipe away his tears.

I'd watch him in his little dreams—
At night, when all asleep,
And try to catch the angel beams
That o'er him watch did keep.

I'd try to be the first at morn
When he would ope his eyes—
To see the glory that adorn
A baby's sweet surprise.

Please come and bring that boy real soon—
Don't keep me in suspense—
They say I'm acting like a loon,
And that I have no sense.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

CRIMINALS

Last night while winter's wintry blast
Was driving snow and sleet,
I thought of many a poor outcast
Unsheltered on the street;
Of many a widow left alone
In poverty's distress,
Who on their own resources thrown,
Were filled with bitterness.

I thought of the inhuman act
Of owners of coal mines,
Who entered into a compact—
In heartless, mean combines—
And raised the price of coal so high,
That few could purchase heat,
And many possibly might die—
Exposed to snow and sleet.

I hold more honor for the man
Who bravely takes by force,
Than for the coward, sneaking clan,
Who suffer no remorse:
The greatest criminals of the age
Are multi-millionaires—
Who in such dirty schemes engage—
And plan such filthy snares.

I read in the Appeal today,
About a negro man—
Who stole a chicken on his way—
“*His sentence three years ran.*”

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Yet if illegal, mean combine,
Should corner all the wheat—
And more than that, *I interline—*
Should also corner meat—
E'en though the poor should starve and die—
I do right here opine—
The only law that would apply
Would be some flimsy fine.
Had I my way law would prevail—
I'd make it known to men—
For some things they would land in jail,
For this, they'd land in pen.

MOTHERS' SONS

No muffled drums are beating here—
No treading softly o'er a bier—
But to the sound of thund'rous roar—
Whilst grape and shrapnel's whistling o'er—
And cannon's blast that split the air—
'Midst blood that's running everywhere—
And awful shrieks of mangled ones—
We are burying mothers' sons:

Mothers' sons.

No time have we to drop a tear—
No crossing of the hands is here—
The shrouds are all of bloody gear—
Our hands are always full of smear:
No three by six by six feet deep—
We bury them in one great heap.
No favors shown to high born ones—
We are burying mothers' sons.

Mothers' sons.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

CAROLYN LOUISE JENKINS

Wee flower that has sprung to birth,
I wish thee all thy mother's worth;
Thy father's spirit—freed from fault—
And every good thing to exalt.

I doubt not but in future years,
Thou'lt have thy share of joy and tears;
For light and shadow here on earth
Begins the very day of birth.

Each rose that blooms has thorns beneath,
And pains go with each laurel wreath.
Life's mountain side is rough and steep,
And we must toil if we would reap.

Each has a place to fill on earth,
And we should strive to prove our worth.
Ne'er shirk the duties here entailed,
But struggle 'til the heights are scaled.

Though worn and weary with the strife,
Keep struggling for a better life;
And though the burden heavy seems,
Let hope shine forth with sunny beams.

And when at last you reach the end,
May your tried spirit sweetly blend—
With all the loved ones gone before,
To suffer grief and pain no more.

Then, from immortal height look down,
And cheer some other to a crown;
Some heart bowed down with earthly strife—
And lift them to a higher life.



“Wee flower that has sprung to birth,
I wish thee all thy mother’s worth.”



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

SKELETONS

We bow ourselves with worldly care;
Full well we know it does no good,
Nor does it make our burdens less,
But adds to melancholy's mood.

Yet ne'ertheless, we cannot help
Our minds from broodings filled with care:
Distorted visions keep from sleep,
Our thoughts so filled with darksome fear.

Each heart hath secrets kept within—
For untold wealth would not disclose;
And though the face may show a smile—
Within, 'tis dark and all morose.

The phantom ghost of other times,
Doth wring regret from inmost soul;
And as the tide of time rolls on,
We're tortured by old mem'ry's ghoul.

Though vain regret may o'er us steal,
We profit not by looking back,
Yet as our memories urge us on,
We yield, and suffer torture's rack.

I WOULD NOT ASK A GREATER BOON

I would that I might pass my life
Forever by thy side,
Free from the cares of mortal strife—
Just with thee to abide.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Just to sit by my own hearthstone,
And feel thy presence near—
With ne'er a grief, or sob, or moan,
And thee alone to cheer.

I would not ask a greater boon
While living on this earth—
Than just to hear thee softly croon,
O'er first fruition's birth.

To watch the nestling snuggling there,
Upon thy bosom white—
With tiny fingers pulling hair—
And fireside shining bright.

With just sufficient to the end
' For comfort's sustenance;
That joy and happiness might blend,
And sweet content enhance.

That leisure moments, in sweet peace,
Be spent with thee in joy;
From all life's trouble, a surcease—
And nothing to annoy.

KEEP THE SOUL BEAUTIFUL

The roses plucked and worn today,
Will wither soon and pass away;
Their fragrance sweet that filled the air,
Will be replaced by others fair.
*With careless thought you throw one down
And place another on your gown.*



“To watch the nestling snuggling there,
Upon thy bosom white—”



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The roses that now fill your room,
You will not miss while others bloom;
But soon cold winter's chilling air—
Will blight, and make your garden bare.
*'Tis then, while leaves are sere and brown—
You'll find no rose to deck your gown.*

You may, just like a butterfly—
Have beauty that will please the eye—
But after all, 'tis but skin deep,
And wrinkles soon may make you weep.
*A soul's sweet beauty always tends
To gather 'round one, many friends.*

Then as old age doth bend the frame—
Those dear old friends remain the same.
They still see beauty in the face—
That love has filled with noble grace:
*Though winter's wind may blow each day,
The beauty of that soul will stay.*

THE OLD TIME NEGRO

I still libs wid ol' master—
Aldough dey say I'se free;
An' do I dosent has ter—
Yet dis de place fo' me.
De time I'se born I can't tell—
So many years ago—
Dey say de time de stars fell
Frum hebben like de snow.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Ol' master born de same day,
An' ebber sence dat time—
I'se bin wid him in work an' play—
Frum boyhood to man's prime.
As boys we played togedder,
An' clumb de ol' grape vine,
An' rambled o'er de medder
In de pleasant spring sunshine.

Ol' master allus fed me
Frum de table where he eat,
An' allus careful fo' to see
Dat I wuz clean an' neat.
De war free all de niggers,
An' lef' de place all bare;
But master done some figgers,
An' rent de place on share.

'Twas skimpin' kine o' libbin—
Not like de good ol' days—
Jes' skimp an' sabe an' scribbin—
An' doin' 'dout always.
But master held de ol' place,
An' missis done her share—
'Til some de niggers 'gin to brace,
An' times once more wuz fair.

De niggers all wuz learnin'
Dat dey mus' work or die—
Dat freedom widout earnin'—
No eats would dem supply.
So wid dat combination
A scrappin' o' de rows,
Quite soon de ol' plantation
Wuz bloomin' like a rose.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I nebber axed fo' money—
Fo' master allus saw—
I got my share o' honey,
To fill ol' nature's law;
An' now an' den a quarter,
To buy a little trash—
To mix up kin' o' sorter
Wid my daily dish o' hash.

But I wuz wid my master,
Bof mornin', noon and night,
An' nebber had to pester—
But lef' to him, dat fight!
Dey is some free born niggers,
Dat loaf's mos' ebery day;
But what's de puzzlin' figgers—
Is, how dey makes it pay?

I still libs wid ol' master,
An' will until I die;
An' when to leave, I has ter—
I'll wait fo' him on high.

REPLY TO CRITICISM OF NEGRO EDITOR ON THE OLD TIME NEGRO

Poor humble black man, in thy heart—
Through misconception, thou dost smart;
And brooding o'er past slavery's night—
Hath dimmed love's glory with a blight.
Know ye not, God, in wisdom great—
Created all men to their state—
And each one fills his proper sphere
Upon this dear old hemisphere?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Love is not bound by race or creeds,
But e'er responds where it best feeds:
The black man's master ever gave—
A true affection to his slave—
And often through the gloomy night,
Sat by his bed 'til broad daylight,
And often o'er his sick couch hung—
To moisten his poor fevered tongue:

He never failed a need attend,
With heartfelt sympathy to blend.
Ah! Oft I see in visions now—
A white hand stroke a poor black brow!
Why! Even at the end of war!
That left full many a bleeding scar!
I've seen both master and the slave,
Stick close together to the grave!

It was a love not bound by race—
A love that nothing could efface:
Born as a slave on his birthday!
Nay! In his master's heart, I say!
I point with pride to that past race,
Who felt no shame of a black face:

There is a purpose in all things;
From evil oft a good thing springs;
Compare yourself with native state—
All grovelling in filth and hate—
Where tribe enslaves another tribe,
And virtue's sold for a bauble bribe!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Think you, that only you were slaves?
How about Egypt's Jewish graves?
God's chosen people here on earth—
By Pharoah, enslaved from birth!
Again, in Babylon they wrought—
And through this means, God, lessons taught—
And purged them from all pagan stain,
To lead the world to Him again.

Old slavery's past—the shackles gone—
And all rejoice at freedom's dawn:
It did a work to help the world—
Christ's banner, in black hearts unfurled.
Now go ye on and do your best,
And trust in God for all the rest;
In His good time He'll do His part—
And comfort every clean, true heart.

A COMMON WEED

'Twas but a common little weed,
'Midst many flowers rare,
That lived content amidst the mead,
Dependent on God's care.

Full many regal roses blew
With beauty to ensnare,
Whilst odors of sweet morning's dew,
Made fragrant all the air.

Each petal of the lowly weed
Was of the same dull hue,
But dewdrops fed its thirsty need,
As day by day it grew.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The bright sunbeams played on its head
And gentle zephyrs blew—
And silken weaves of spider thread
Flashed with each morning's dew.

'Twas but a tiny little thing—
But God had placed it there
To bloom and blossom in the spring—
And comfort some despair.

For every tiny thing that grows,
God purposed in its birth,
A stream of comfort that bestows
Some blessing on this earth.

* * * * *

My lady plucked the full blown rose,
And placed with tender care—
Upon her bosom, to repose—
And it was wondrous fair!

She tramped the weed beneath her feet
Without a thought or care—
And its weak stem quite lowly beat—
And left it lying there.

The full blown blushing rose, by night,
Its beauty all had shed;
The odor sweet had taken flight,
And left it wilted, dead.

My lady threw with careless thought,
The wilted rose away,
And from the bush, another sought,
To take its place next day.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The same sad fate met this sweet rose,
And laid its head full low;
Though for a time it did repose,
And on her bosom glow.

And thus with many a bud and bloom,
Until, alas! at last—
Cold winter came and sealed their doom,
And killed with icy blast.

* * * * *

A nature lover came one day
Across the lowly weed,
All bent and broken, 'midst decay,
But full of goodly seed.

Its root, deep buried in the earth,
Possessed a virtue rare—
Of value more than gold in worth—
To comfort sick despair.

* * * * *

*The bell had tolled the solemn sound
Of midnight's silent hour;
A mother knelt with grief profound
Above an infant's bower;
And earnest prayers arose to God,
That He would mercy show,
And take away the chastening rod,
And health on it bestow.*

* * * * *

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

'Twas but a liquid drop or two,
Rubbed on the little breast,
That ope'd the pores with moisture's dew,
And gave the infant rest.
The lowly little common weed,
Had proved true value's worth,
For 'twas a friend in time of need—
When all things else seemed dearth.

WITHIN THIS GARDEN

Within this garden, flowers rare,
Grow in profusion everywhere.
There's tall pale lillies, white and fair—
And roses scattered here and there.
Pinks and daisies, violets, too—
And morning glories freshed with dew:
Bridal wreath and carnation,
And other blooms of creation.

Each day I come to spend an hour,
And meditate upon God's power.
Surrounded here with lovely things,
My heart with rapture upward wings.
I think of children far away,
Who seldom glimpse a sprig or spray
Of nature's green, or flower grand,
So common to our southern land.

Who gaze with envy as they pass,
At withered roses through a glass.
Oh, would that I could gather all,
And scatter in some tenant hall;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Then hide behind some hidden door,
And watch them scramble on the floor—
To gather up the beauties there,
And deck themselves with tender care:

To see a rose in fond embrace
Pressed lovingly 'gainst some wan face!
To see expressed from some poor eye
A look of joy and ecstasy!
Oh, such a sight would lift me up,
And fill with joy my earthly cup;
'Twould help me on the upward way—
And make life brighter every day.

AS EACH DAY

As each day I older grow,
Sweetest mem'ries backward flow
To the cabin on the hill,
Overlooking the old mill;
And I hear the soft sweet croon
Of an old familiar tune,
Faintly echo on the breeze,
Mingling with the swaying trees.

Many years have passed away,
And my hair is turning gray;
Noted singers I have heard,
And my heart has oft been stirred;
But my mother's voice, to me,
Echoes of sweet memory—
Is a melody so sweet—
Naught on this earth can compete.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Love was mingled with each note,
That came from her gushing throat,
Lifting up to realms above,
Curing grief with songs of love.

Memories of the crystal pool,
With its limpid waters cool,
Fondly meeting my embrace,
Shows a mirrored boyish face;
And I dream a dream of joy,
That I am once more a boy;
And I leap with eager haste,
Once again its joys to taste,
And gaze on with fond delight,
As the mill wheel turns its flight,
Causing golden clouds to rise,
Like the rainbow in the skies.

Now I hear the tinkling bells
Of the cows in distant dells,
And within the cabin door,
See my mother's face once more;
And the golden setting sun—
Showing that the day is done—
Slowly sinks behind the hill,
Where I hear the whippoorwill.

Then the chirping buzzy sound,
That in nature does abound,
Fills the air with strident notes,
Coming from discordant throats.
Lowing cattle homeward bound,
Calves all welcoming the sound,
Stars appearing with the dark,
Then the welcome hound dog's bark.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Hark! A hunter's horn quite near
Falls upon my welcome ear,
And with a companion boon,
I'm off hunting for a coon.

Through the swamp and marshy brake,
Past the glen and to the lake,
Following the old coon's scent,
Spirit with the chase is blent.
Sweet the music of the hound,
Fills the forest all around;
Echoes from his full deep throat,
On the distant breezes float.

Hark! He bays, his work is done—
Signals, come on in a run;
Soon we dig him out of a hole,
And wedge his tail in a split pole;
Homeward bound we wend our way,
Just before the break of day,
Stretch ourselves upon the floor,
Daylight comes and still we snore:

Ah! Old scenes of yesterday!
How they fade and pass away;
Leaving us in age bereft,
Nothing but sweet memory left;
Yet as evening twilight gleams,
Oft we see them in our dreams,
See our mother's smiling face,
Visit each familiar place.

Now I lay—*she's near me now*,
Softly strokes my dampened brow;
If I should . . . e'er I wake—
I pray—Lord—soul—take.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

ROSALINE

I saw your picture, Rosaline,
Just as you were in childhood's glow;
And though your face is changed I ween—
Your head like mine, as white as snow—
I only saw you as you were,
When love's sweet dream first stirred your heart,
And mocking bird, sweet chorister—
Sang on, while cupid cast his dart.

Full many moons have cast their shade
Since last we stood and plighted troth;
E'er long, the mattock and the spade
May ope our graves; for death is wrath
Of time, delaying ripened fruit,
And soon we'll pass from earthly scene,
And in immortal life's pursuit—
May meet again, oh, Rosaline!

'Tis sad, the changes of the years
Leave blighted heart hopes in their wake,
And many are the bitter tears
We shed, as retrospect we take:
Yet there is joy in looking back,
A joy that mingles with sweet pain,
And though we suffer torture's rack,
Sweet memory, our hearts enchain.

Your picture brought, oh, Rosaline,
The past gone years of yesterday;
The swelling buds o' spring's deep green,
E'er form was bent and head was gray;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When ardent hopes of youth were bright,
And dream ships gaily sailed away,
And life seemed full of joy's delight,
And heart was singing night and day.

Now, Rosaline, I'm bending low—
I'll soon enrich old Mother Earth—
Soon flowers on my grave they'll strow,
To honor my poor mortal worth.
Once more I kiss your picture face—
Ah, me, dear girl, I wish 'twere you,
And long for just one last embrace,
Before I say, adieu, adieu.

MEMORY IS SWEETLY CALLING

Balmy breezes gently blowing,
Ripening fields of grain, all glowing,
Bobolink, to mate is calling,
Down from trees the fruit is falling,
Summer time is here.

In the azure skies, are gleaming
Tints of golden colors, beaming,
On the wing, song birds are flying,
Singing praise all glorifying,
Summer time is here.

Rustling leaves to breeze are swaying,
Squirrels here and there are playing,
Katydid with noisy singing,
On the air their buzz are flinging,
Summer time is here.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Down beneath the weeping willow,
With a hard root for a pillow,
Dreamy thoughts go outward drifting,
With the golden clouds all shifting,
Summer time is here.

Overhead, the boughs all drooping,
Like an aged man all stooping,
Tears seem from the leaves all dripping,
Downward, downward, ever slipping,
Summer time is here.

Faint in distance, song of reapers,
Rustling vines and trailing creepers,
Swaying moss with graceful curling,
Rhythmic streamlets softly purling,
Summer time is here.

Mem-o-ry is sweetly calling
To the mind, past scenes enthralling,
Youthful voices gaily singing,
On the old grape vine a swinging,
Summer time is here.

Pine trees swaying, always sighing,
Ozone breezes, purifying,
Mem-o-ry, o' sweetly calling,
To the heart past scenes enthralling,
Summer time is here.

MAGGIE

Most heartless, almost vain coquette,
Oh, spare me and be mine;
Thy beauties hath my heart beset,
The power all is thine.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Such beauty as thou hast in form,
In body, and in fine—
No other girl hath such a charm,
Nor eyes like those of thine.

Oh, spare me, beautiful Maggie, spare,
Or wretched be my part;
Thou art so beautiful, fresh and fair,
That thou hast won my heart.

PASSING OF BARLEY CORN

I am sitting here in sorrow,
Grieving for old barley corn;
He is leaving us tomorrow,
And it makes me feel forlorn;
For his charming friendly presence
Will be banished from the gang,
And the substitute of essence,
May cause each of us to hang.

Ah! The bygone years of pleasure
Will be treasured in the heart;
And the strict old legal measure
Will cause many tears to start.
For we'll miss the dear old bottle,
With the cork in its old snout,
And the fumes mixed with the splottle,
As we poured the contents out.

And we'll think of song and dancing,
Mixed with merriment and shout,
While old barley corn, entrancing,
Was at hand or close about.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And the melting of the feeling,
That came o'er us with a rush—
As old barley corn was stealing
Through our brain to make us gush.

And the tears in eyes, all blinking,
Brought about by drinking booze—
And the terrible heart sinking,
Caused by barley corn's abuse—
We will pass up for the morrow,
And for just one drink we'll sigh—
For the mem'ry will cause sorrow,
And we'll feel so awful dry.

To recall will fill with yearning,
And will parch us like a drouth,
And while memory is churning,
Wish the bottle to the mouth;
And in dreams, while gently sleeping,
Just before the break of morn,
We will catch ourselves a weeping,
For one drink of barley corn.

SUPPOSE THE MOTIVE

Suppose the motive prompting me,
Was just the praise of men—
That I might in the papers see,
From some one's facile pen—
My name in type of largest size
Upon the foremost page—
And something said that I might prize,
And leave as heritage!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Would it be wrong or cause you loss,
E'en though all this be so—
To speak a word that would emboss,
And cause my heart to glow?

The roses spread o'er graves of dead,
Is but an empty show:
A garland on a living head
Is better to bestow;
Then let the gracious gift be mine
While still a living breath,
And let the giving hand be thine—
Before I sleep in death.

TREES PLANTED TO MEMORY OF
NICK T. PEGUES, JR., AND S. M. MAUNEY,
AT EARLE, ARKANSAS,
NOVEMBER 11, 1921

*To S. M. Mauney and Nick Pegues,
In loving memory we plant these trees.
Each, true to duty, at country's call—
Left home and loved ones; yea! gave their all.*

* * * * *

No longer loved ones at the door
Will greet with smiling face—
No longer, when the day is o'er,
Will be the fond embrace—
But each sad heart will ever crave,
In sorrow and despair—
The loved form lying in the grave—
Once beautiful and fair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

As emblems of immortal life,
We plant for each a tree,
And pray that each, in beauty rife—
May bloom eternally;
But as we die to live again—
E'en so must each of these,
Like germinating seeds of grain—
Again to meet the breeze.

And when at last our toil is o'er,
And we shall pass away—
To journey to that blessed shore
Where all's eternal day—
May birds nest in these trees and sing
Their songs of praise and love—
And grieving hearts a comfort bring,
To lift their thoughts above.

MOTHERS OF OLD

How well we remember
The mothers of old,
Whose smiling sweet faces
Showed hearts of pure gold.
Dear home loving women—
The husband's sweet pride—
In whom sons and daughters
In love could confide.

Ah! bright were the faces
That gathered around,
Where embers were glowing
And mother was found;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And many sweet counsels
In simple words came—
From a home loving heart,
Without blemish or shame.

Ah! clean simple pleasures
Held forth in those days;
No fox trots or huggings,
Or underworld plays.
The lassies were modest,
And mothers were there—
To look after loved ones
With tender, sweet care.

The lads were all timid
And full of respect;
Would willingly die,
A girl to protect;
And never was heard
An evil remark—
About any woman—
In street or in park.

The courting was honest,
And open, those days;
And both sons and daughters,
Were taught virtuous ways.
Though simple their pleasures,
Contentment was there—
And home loving firesides,
Made brighter the glare.

MY LITTLE GRANDSON

My dainty, darling little boy,
You fill my heart with sweetest joy;
With love you've bound it up so tight,
I'm almost giddy with delight.

What gives you such a loving sway—
O'er hearts you meet with every day?
Is it those eyes of lovely blue—
That so bespeaks a nature true?

Or can it be that curly head—
Has woven 'round our hearts a thread
Of love so strong, it seems divine!
Oh, lovely boy! My heart is thine.

Oh, dainty, dimpled, laughing face—
In which your father's face I trace—
Each lineament, in which I see
Your father, in his infancy.

You've simply filled my heart with love.
I pray to Him who rules above,
To guide your footsteps as you grow,
And keep you from all sin and woe.

I'd like to keep you as you are—
A winsome little baby star—
But well I know in coming years,
The chances are, you'll shed some tears.

So, baby mine, I'll pray for you—
And ask of God, you to endure
With power from His throne above,
To conquer all you meet with love.



"My dainty, darling little boy."



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

NOW AS THE LEAVES FALL

Now as the leaves fall one by one,
And blustering winds are blowing;
And harvest's season's work is done,
The threshing and the mowing;
I gaze with sadness on the scene,
Of nature all a-changing—
From flowers of spring and carpets green,
To withered stubble ranging.

The straw in mounds are in the field,
And happy cattle gather;
The proof of an abundant yield,
And pleasant harvest weather;
But nature's bare, and leafless trees
Seem sighing with a sadness—
At coming of old winter's freeze—
Destroying spring's sweet gladness.

The birds are gone—no songs we hear—
No longer footsteps loiter
Along the banks of brooklets clear,
Or crystal streams of water.
No graceful stems of waving rush
To greet the eye with pleasure;
But withered leaves and mire and slush,
And dead things without measure.

The valleys now spread out to view,
That once were decked with flowers,
Where sweetest balmy breezes blew,
Refreshed by April showers—

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

No longer shows the carpet green,
Or sign of spring's sweet cheering,
But killed by angry winter's spleen—
No beauty's in the clearing.

No longer skies of azure blue,
With golden sunbeams shining;
But darkened clouds of dismal hue,
And rain and sleet combining.
No longer cherry blossoms blow,
Nor lilies with sweet meekness—
But flurry clouds of drizzling snow,
Fills nature full of bleakness.

LIFE'S SANDS ARE FLOWING

The sands of life are flowing one by one,
And soon will come the setting of my sun.
The soul will leave this crumbling shell of clay,
And I will be forgotten, in a day.

They'll place sweet flowers on my senseless frame,
And on a marble headstone, write my name,
Then leave me all alone to silent sleep,
And as I've sown, on judgment day I'll reap.

Those whom I leave behind will plod along—
And grief will be forgotten in a song.
Some loved one may, in after passing years,
In retrospection, shed a few sad tears;
But as earth's burdens on their shoulders bear,
All thought of me will vanish with the care;
I'll silent sleep within old Mother Earth,
While flowers from my soil will spring to birth.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Some careless feet may tread upon the ground—
E'en plows may level down the mellow mound—
And grains of wheat may meet the gentle blow
Of evening zephyrs, in the twilight glow;
And at the ending of the harvest days,
The cattle, o'er my melting form may graze,
And possibly, an humble weed may spring—
Whose goodly seed may cause a bird to sing.

Then as I sleep, unconscious of my lot,
A tree may grow and beautify the spot,
And some sweet maid, with handsome lad—and bold—
May list' once more to the sweetest story told;
But as they sit beneath the grateful shade—
All thoughtless of the mattock and the spade—
And joyous plan a fuure, fair and bright
In fairy land, where there should be no night—
The tide of time, resistless, flowing by,
Will echo both to songs of laughter and sigh,
For many will dance, while others will mourn,
As loved ones in a hearse to graveyards are borne.

*And over and over, and over you'll see—
The same thing going on, eternally;
A shout and a song! A sob and a sigh!
Today we are born, tomorrow we die.*

A MASTER MASON'S ADVICE TO HIS SON

Be honest, my boy,
Always act on the square;
Take no advantage,
It is best to be fair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Though hardships may come,
And your spirit may rend,
Fight nobly my boy,
It is best in the end.

The lane may be long,
And the burdens may bear,
But somewhere it ends,
And you'll be happy there!
Oh, I know sometimes
We are tempted to wrong,
But pass it up, boy,
To resist makes you strong.

Each time you succeed,
And temptation's put down,
Will add to your strength
And make brighter your crown.
The face of all men
Is an index, my boy,
Of how they have lived—
Whether sin, or clean joy:

Each wrinkle doth show
Like a plain written page—
What that life has been—
On this old human stage;
And the eye, my boy,
That can look straight at you,
Is the eye of one—
To attach yourself to.

For the eye that shifts,
And returns not your stare—
Is the eye of one
It is safe to beware.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The man who is square—
Who has nothing to fear—
Will look at you straight,
And you'll find him sincere.

There is about him,
That will cause you to see—
The greatness of truth
And real nobility.
Now, truth is, my boy,
A divine attribute;
It cometh from God,
Unchanging, absolute.

Apply it to life,
To each act and each deed—
Though slow it may seem—
In the end, you'll succeed;
For truth after all,
Is a foundation stone—
On which you can build
An everlasting throne.

Take heed to my words,
In your heart sink them deep;
Sooner or later,
A reward you will reap.
Then when the time comes
For you to ascend—
You will leave behind,
Full many a friend.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

TO MILDRED BRANDES

The lovely rose in its repose,
Delightful to the view—
The violet blue refreshed with dew,
Cannot compare with you.

Sweet joy's surprise from thy dark eyes,
Like sunrise o'er the hill—
Glimmers a light so dazzling bright,
It gives my heart a thrill.

Thy shy sweet glance doth all entrance,
And gives my heart a glow—
Like rainbow tints of golden glints,
As delicate as snow.

Oh, little girl with head of curl,
And ways so cute and sweet—
I wish for thee both love and glee,
And joy on earth complete.

TO MY WIFE: ON FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF WEDDED LIFE

This day makes forty years ago
Since we were wed, my dear;
And though your hair is white as snow—
To me, you have no peer.



"Oh, little girl with head of curl."



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Though wrinkles now show in your face—
Your form though bent with age—
Within, your soul is full of grace—
A cleanly written page.

Although some silent tears we've shed,
And ups and downs we've seen—
In main, a happy life we've led
Amidst the changing scene.

Now sitting by our own hearthstone
In meditative mood—
Dwelling upon the love you've shown,
Fills me with gratitude.

I know the heart within you dear,
Is full of love's sweet glow;
It never yet has failed me here,
And never will, I know.

We've worked and struggled side by side—
We've had some aches and pains—
Though by misfortune often tried,
We've reached the level plains.

And now we're on our downward path—
We're traveling to the grave—
May naught occur to cause us wrath,
Or hate to make us rave.

And when at last we lay us down
To rest beneath the sod—
May each of us have a bright crown—
To carry to our God.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

DEDICATED TO THOMAS B. WEAVER CLASS,
A. AND A. S. RITE, VALLEY OF LITTLE
ROCK, APRIL 19-20-21, 1920, 583 IN
THE CLASS.

“THE RUINED TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM”

The scene was sad and desolate,
And Israel's heart was crushed;
The temple in a ruined state,
And sound of praise was hushed;
Three full score years and ten had passed,
Since Neburzaradan—
Had, by the will of God, at last—
Destroyed it as per plan.

The monumental heap of stone
Lay scattered here and there;
In Babylon, old Israel's groan
Was full of deep despair.
They hung their harps on willow trees,
And full of agony—
Their voices filled the evening breeze
With supplicating plea.

The stately columns of the hall
Wrought out by master hand—
Like ghostly phantoms to recall
A scene that once was grand—
Towered aloft to heaven's dome
Like sentinels of God—
To guide old Israel's turn to home,
Relieved from chast'ning rod.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The arches of the colonnade—
All glistening—marble white—
In curves of true proportion made—
Was a sad, lovely sight.
The shadow of the moon's soft beam—
Like tiny flakes of snow—
Cast over all a silvery gleam,
A soft sweet radiant glow.

The broken column to recall
The gift of HIRAM'S skill—
The arch beneath the crumbling wall—
Each gave the heart a thrill.
The silence that seemed so profound—
The distant courts in view—
The vastness of the sacred ground
Where once they worshipped true—

All seemed to lift the heart to God,
And silent prayers were said—
For those who lay beneath the sod—
Old Israel's sainted dead.
With saddened face, Zerrubabel—
Of princely house, the chief—
Returned to Babylon, to tell
The great king of his grief.

True to the vows that once he gave,
Though tempted sore indeed—
With wealth and power to enslave—
Was loyal to his creed.
Before a king whose sceptre swayed
A mighty, vast domain—
Stood for the truth, and undismayed—
Refused dishonor's stain.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Found of true worth by royalty,
The great king raised him up,
And granting unto him his plea,
Removed the bitter cup;
Restored the golden vessels to
The Holy House of God—
That Israel might worship true,
Again, on sacred sod.

Decreed a band of soldiers brave,
To conduct safely home;
And orders to dominions gave—
Beneath all heaven's dome—
To help him all the way along
In his praiseworthy task—
And greet him with a cheery song,
And grant whate'er he'd ask.

Here see, new soldiers of the Rite—
Ye class five eighty-three—
That truth and loyalty is might—
As taught in the degree.
Though death may stare you in the face,
Be loyal, true and brave;
Have faith in truth and God embrace,
And you need never crave.

SEE THE LITTLE STARS

See the little stars a-peeping?
All is clear and bright tonight,
And my lady, she is sleeping—
Robed in dainty garments white.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Ah! she wist' not they are blinking
On her sweet face with delight—
While in jealous thought I'm thinking—
Jealous of the stars the sight.

See how slyly they seem winking,
While my love lies dreaming there?
To my jealous heart seems drinking
Nectar, from her lips so rare:

Oh, ye little stars soft shining,
How I envy you the sight!
For my heart with love repining,
Longs a glimpse of her tonight.

Sleep not love, but gently waking,
Put the wicked stars to flight—
And all other thoughts forsaking,
Think of me, thine own true knight.

* * * * *

Ah! the daylight now is breaking,
And the sun will soon appear,
Then I'll see my loved one shaking
Out her tresses in the air.

And her maiden blush will greet me
If she sees me standing here—
In the shadow of the oak tree,
Hence I'd better disappear.

Farewell, love, the morn is breaking,
Soon the horizon will clear,
And my leave I must be taking—
Or you'll catch me standing here.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A RARE JEWEL

I hold for her a jewel rare—
A jewel that's without compare.
Although a king might give his queen
The finest jewel ever seen—
Yet still this jewel held for her,
Is one whose value she'll prefer,
And fill her heart with sweet content,
Until her life on earth is spent.

'Tis true, to woman's heart is dear,
A brilliant diamond in each ear,
And rings upon her fingers, too,
That flash and glitter to the view—
And yet this jewel, rarer still,
Will give her very heart a thrill
No other jewel ever gave,
And for which she will ever crave.

This jewel is so very rare,
To get it, most of them despair;
For but few men possess this gem,
Fit for a royal diadem—
For ah! it takes all manhood's best
To go through life and stand the test,
Reserving for some future mate—
A cleanly life, to procreate!

And now this jewel I will name;
'Tis just a pure life without shame,
You offer her, like she has led—
When first you ask her if she'll wed.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

To crown her as you would be crowned,
With as chaste a life as that you found;
*Thus jeweled she would rather be—
Than have all pearls within the sea.*

A PLEA FOR DUMB BRUTE

Cold winter's here with rain and sleet,
And everything seems drear;
The lowing cattle's dismal bleat
Is full of sickening fear;
Poor things, exposed to winter's blast—
You cause our hearts to grieve;
You wander like some poor outcast,
No shelter to relieve.

Upon the barren meadow land,
All wretched and distress,
With shaking, shivering forms you stand,
Too cold to take a rest.
Oh, careless, thoughtless, heartless man,
How can you happy be—
When these dumb brutes, whom God did plan,
Are full of misery?

Do you forget the human joy
When milk from udders flow—
And to what use you them employ,
As through this life you go?
Do you forget the wailing cry
Of baby's feeble voice—
When mother's milk had proven dry—
And cow milk was the choice?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, pause, forgetful man, and think—
Let love come in your heart,
And help these poor dumb brutes that shrink—
From winter's chilling dart.
They cannot speak to you their wants,
But their appealing eye
Should fill a loving heart with haunts,
And cause a bitter sigh.

Build them a stall or two that's warm,
And feed them what they need;
To see them shivering in the storm,
Cause loving hearts to bleed.
Show pity as God has shown you,
And give them loving care,
And as content their cuds they chew—
You'll be repaid, I swear.

SONG OF THE LABORER

I'm but a tired and broken man,
Who'd like to take his ease—
And rest the balance of life's span
Beneath his own fig trees.

I've struggled hard for sixty years
To keep the wolf from door;
Suspense has often brought forth tears,
Because I was so poor.

I've lain me down to sleep at night,
And tossed from side to side—
And thought and planned 'til broad daylight,
Some way to stem the tide.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

My soul with anguish oft hath wrung—
My heart oft throbbed with fears—
The sickening mental worries stung,
And filled my eyes with tears.

I'd like declining years to spend
In peace and happiness,
With some old early boyhood friend—
Relieved from all distress.

PASSING AWAY

They are slowly dying
And passing away,
And leave me here sighing
For old yesterday.

My heart now is crying
With grievous pain,
For friends who are lying
In death's cold domain.

How long now defying
Shall I remain here,
All sobbing and sighing
On this hemisphere?

Oh, why this inclining
To lay me to sleep,
In cold death reclining,
My vigils to keep?

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Of life I am tiring,
And death would I greet;
With spirits conspiring,
Old friends would I meet.

Then through the air flying—
In regions above—
New scenes there descrying,
With friends that I love.

Then see to my shrouding
And do not delay—
The time is close crowding
When I must away.

Their spirits are calling—
The echoes I hear—
Though faintly, are falling
Today on my ear.

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

What might have been had I been true,
Is just a thought that fills with rue;
The many errors of past life,
Oft bruised the heart of my sweet wife.

Had I been true and hewed to line—
Avoided women and red wine—
Today in comfort I might rest—
Be free from care, with conscience blest.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I've scattered reckless, much of wealth—
Committed many sins by stealth.
I've gone the rounds both night and day,
And for those rounds I now must pay.

Were I to suffer all alone,
I would not grieve so much, or moan.
But she to whom I promised fair,
Must part of the sin burden bear.

She gave her girlhood's faith to me,
And clung like vine, wreathed to a tree,
While I in manhood's youthful prime,
Just dragged the vine in mud and slime.

I've seen dark rings beneath her eyes,
Brought on by sleepless nights and sighs.
I've seen her blush and sob with shame,
Whilst bending o'er my drunken frame.

Yet, spite of all such sorrows bring—
She, true to me, in love did cling,
And through all sickness, and all pain—
With loving kindness did remain.

*The bad men get the best of wives,
Who stick close to them all their lives—
While many men of real true worth,
Just seem to get the scums of earth.*

'Tis true I've tried to make it up—
Tried to remove the bitter cup—
But ah! she smiles so sadly now—
In grief, my head, I humbly bow.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I love her better in old age,
Than e'er I did in youthful rage.
In grievous sorrow I repent,
The wicked, sinful life I spent.

Could I recall the days of youth,
My vows to her I'd keep in truth;
No sinful thing would I indulge,
But open life to her divulge.

*But ah! too late, what might have been,
Does not blot out a life of sin.
The pure sweet heart, I now so prize—
Sad memory, will agonize.*

Now, always sad, will be her face—
Each wrinkle shows a sorrow's trace—
And as I gaze in her sad eyes—
My heart is filled with bitter sighs.

NO POETRY FOR ME, HE SAID

No poetry for me, he said,
For women it may do;
On stronger food I must be fed,
Than maids with eyes of blue:

I care naught for the rippling streams,
Nor rainbow tints aglow—
Nor for the poet's misty dreams,
That through his brain doth flow.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Tomorrow morn I may be dead—
For life is short you know—
And I must leave something ahead,
If happen I should go.

There is no other life of bliss
So far as I can tell;
I'd better get the best of this,
Than in such dreams to dwell:

* * * * *

*That night the doctor came to see
This same man, lying low;
His heart was full of misery,
And face was full of woe:*

Said he, I'll miss the birds' sweet songs—
I'll miss the flowing streams—
I'll miss the happy passing throngs,
With all their pleasant dreams.

I never got the best of this—
I closed my heart and eye,
To all the beauty and the bliss—
And now I soon must die;
I passed the full blown blushing rose
With all its fragrance sweet;
I passed the lily in its pose—
Tramped all beneath my feet.

I must leave everything behind
That I have gathered here;
Ah! me, I have been fatal blind
To things I now hold dear.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, sing the poet's songs to me—
The songs of Israel's king—
That floated out from sea to sea,
On melody's sweet wing.

Just read me David's one sweet song—
Oh, Lord, my shepherd lead—
In those green pastures all along,
Where all Thy dear sheep feed.
Then when through valley of dark death,
He hath lead safely through—
And I shall breathe immortal breath—
I'll sing sweet songs anew.

OH, FOR THE CALM

Oh, for the calm, the peaceful rounds
Of country life so dear;
To revel in those blissful sounds
So pleasing to my ear;
To rest in peace beneath the trees—
At full length to recline—
To feel, to drink the cooling breeze,
And know that all was mine.

To sit by rockbound babbling brook
Where pleasant thoughts abound;
While idly on my lap, a book,
Near me, my good old hound;
To view the trout in sportive glee,
And sometimes on the hook—
Thus I would like to live and die,
In some secluded nook.



"To sit by rockbound babbling brook."



SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

A MASONIC PRAYER

Almighty God;
Omnipotence divine;
Shield and defend us,
The power is Thine.
Thy followers here
With reverence bow,
To receive Thy blessings,
All mercy show.

Tender each heart
In Thy presence this day;
Take from us all,
Each guilty sin, we pray;
From paths of duty,
We've oft gone astray,
Yet desire in our hearts
To mend our way;
Live better lives
For old Masonry.

Today, in this house,
We pray You, dear Lord,
That each one present
May study Thy word;
At home and abroad,
May our lights so shine,
That the world may know,
Masonry's divine.

May love and charity
Be in us all;
In acts and good deeds,
May we all grow tall;

May each in love,
Reprove his brother's fault;
If going astray—
Plead with him to halt.

Oh, may unkind words
Never be spoken—
For fear some brother's
Heart may be broken;
May we live in joy,
In peace, and in love;
Until death takes us
To the lodge above.

THE CALLED vs. PROFESSIONAL

In language mete, divine and sweet,
To lift one's thoughts above;
With love replete, God's servants treat—
Of His great blessed love.

Not all you meet in pulpit seat,
Are servants called by God;
Some with deceit full and complete,
Are but the devil's clod.

God does not make the great mistake
Of choosing such a one,
To undertake poor souls to wake,
And trust His only Son.

False prophets are the bane and bar
Of many a precious soul;
They do but mar, and oft debar
From heaven's joyous goal.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

True servants beam like stars that gleam,
And spread resplendent light;
The gospel's cream, from them doth stream
To wash away sin's blight.

Such we esteem as in the scheme
Of God's almighty plan,
To preach the theme of love supreme,
And save poor fallen man.

Though made of dust, God does them trust
'Midst life's tempestuous wave;
And so they must, their lives adjust
To God's own plan to save.

Professional man, God will you ban,
So we must be discreet;
No partisan of class or clan—
Can keep you from defeat.

Sometimes we fear that devils here,
With faces painted white—
Just engineer upon this sphere,
To keep us from God's light.

Whom God doth call, we one and all
Respect upon this earth;
His words appall and then enthrall,
And sinners seek new birth.

You may have brain, speech to enchain,
And a great crowded church;
'Twill be in vain, there'll be no gain,
Though you may crow and perch.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

And in the end, when you descend—
Old satan's hand to shake—
My reverend friend, your soul will blend—
And with him hell partake.

'TIS SOLEMN NIGHT (*A War Poem*)

'Tis solemn night—
The stars shine bright—
Sleep calmly, France,
Thy sons will fight!

See! they advance
With upraised lance,
In battle array—
To chase the hated foe away!

The murderous band
Can never stand
In virtue's way
'Til break of day!

See! now thy hosts,
Like silent ghosts,
In solid phalanx
March on their trench to thin their ranks!

Oh, God of love,
Who dwells above!
Be with our sons,
Our loved ones!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, in Thy might
Help them to fight,
For home and right—
Send legions from above tonight!

Oh, fill with fear
The vandal's ear,
That they may flee
In trepidity:

Nor stop the scum
Through Belgium;
But make them flee
Beyond the Rhine to the Red Sea!

Then voice we'll raise
In thanks and praise—
A new song sing
To Thee, our King!

Then hand in hand—
A Christian band—
In tender mood,
We'll help our foes whom we subdued.

OH, DROP ME A LINE

Oh, drop me a line expressing in part,
Some tender emotion that comes from the heart;
Some touching sweet sentence, recalling to view,
A scene of our childhood reminding of you.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

It may be a meadow or just a grape vine,
Or 'neath a tree's shadow that mem'ry will twine;
Then, fond recollection, recalling to view,
Will stir the affection while thinking of you.

It may be in vision I'll see your dear face,
And dreamily linger each feature to trace;
Then while the fire glimmers and embers burn low,
Sweet mem'ry with rapture will ardently glow.

Just say that you saw me one night in a dream,
You saw me, although but a glimmering gleam;
Yet the lines of my face were easy to trace,
And found in your heart a most loving embrace.

Then drop me a line, some soul thought impart,
To tender and quicken and pulsate the heart;
Some thought that may ever remind me of you,
And cheer me as onward this life I pursue.

THE AUTUMN OF MY LIFE

The autumn of my life draws near,
Sweet spring has passed away;
The winter season now is here,
My form will soon decay.

The dream life of my youth is gone—
It drifted out to sea—
Without a chart to guide it on—
To ports of mystery.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Strange isles were seen in distant miles,
And beauty ever stirred
The heart and soul with joyous smiles,
While music sweet was heard.

From port to port it ever sailed,
Nor ever anchored deep;
Full many phantom ships were hailed,
As swiftly by they'd sweep.

Just on and on it ploughed the deep
With all its sails unfurled;
Full many a storm did o'er it sweep,
And mighty billows hurled.

At last it homeward bent its prow
With sails all tattered—torn—
And hoary frost upon its bow,
And timbers old and worn.

And now it swings at anchor's length,
Just drifting to and fro—
As if to try the rusty strength
Of the chain, and sink below.

Soon worn and wearied with the test,
A link will give away;
Then the old ship will seek its rest—
Will sink, and soon decay.

WRINKLES

There's a difference in the wrinkles
That you find in many folks;
Some have eyes all full of twinkles,
And are full of jolly jokes;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

'Tis a pleasant thing to meet them,
For their humor never fails;
And they smile, where e'er you greet them
With a wrinkle that regales.

There are soft and sweet old faces
With a peace in every line;
In each feature you find traces
Of a life of love divine;
You can trace the joy and pleasure
Of the sweetness of each life,
By the true and royal measure
Seen in faces free from strife.

Then there's wrinkles, hard old wrinkles—
In some faces that you meet—
That in foxy, cunning twinkles—
Tells a life of low deceit;
And the index on their faces
Tells you all you need to know—
For the wrinkles show the traces
Of a life of sin and woe.

NEGLECTED CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS' GRAVES

Here's where our gallant soldiers lie,
Neglected in this spot;
No stone to mark their resting place,
No fence enclose their lot;
It seems these people here forgot
The mem'ry of their brave;

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Neglected in this lonely spot,
No flowers deck their grave.
And yet, Alas! a poet's tear
Is all that I can give—
I'll sing their praise in songs most dear,
As long as I shall live.

LET US NOT LOOK FOR TROUBLE, 'TIL TROUBLE TROUBLES US

We cannot cross the river,
Until the bridge we reach;
We cannot feel joy's quiver,
Until this truth we teach.

Let us not look for trouble,
'Til trouble troubles us;
'Twill only make it double,
And keep us in a muss.

The mind is so created—
That suggestions of joy,
Will keep us from all hatred,
And things that would annoy.

But then, if the suggestion,
Is one that's full of fear,
'Twill fill us with dejection,
And make us shed a tear.

Then keep your face bright shining
With thoughts that brighten up;
'Twill keep you from repining,
And joy'll o'erflow your cup.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

OLD CROSS VINE SMOKE

Did you ever in your ramble
During boyhood's happy day—
When from mother you would shamble,
And with cunning steal away—
Down where old cross vines were growing—
Near some massive, grand old oak—
And while gentle breeze was blowing,
Cut a vine or two and smoke?

Oh, the joy, without expression,
As you puffed the old vine stem—
Though in after years' confession—
It was no Havana gem;
Yet the pleasure, though but fleeting,
Filled your very soul with joy—
And e'en now, with old friends meeting—
Wish you were again a boy.

Now, today, in silence smoking—
Gazing as the smoke ascends—
Old cross vines seem all a joking,
And my spirit with them blends;
And some feeling seems invoking
Me, to steal to that old oak—
And although it may prove choking—
Cut a vine or two and smoke.

SPRING IS COMING, GENTLE ANNIE

Spring is coming, gentle Annie,
And the trees will blossom soon;
Then young men, "*perhaps dear Dannie*"—
'Neath the soft rays of the moon—

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Will again repeat the story
That so often has been told,
That will fill your heart with glory—
Ever new, yet very old.

Ah, the whisper, "dear, I love you"—
Fills the very soul with bliss;
And like moisture of the fresh dew,
Is the ecstasy of a kiss;
And the melting of emotion—
Like an agony of joy—
Seems to tell you there's no lotion
Like your own true blue-eyed boy.

And the soft pale moon all gleaming,
Seems more beautiful by far—
When of love your heart is dreaming—
Than the brilliant eastern star;
And it seems to have the power,
Just to make your feelings glow,
Like the blushing of a flower,
Watered by the streams below.

NOBODY WANTS DREAMS

Nobody wants dreams, Will,
They don't care to pay
For sighs and heartaches
That brought hairs of gray!
They don't care for beauty
That's bought with a sigh,
And born of a travail
That tear dimmed each eye!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

'Tis only the remnants
You offer for sale,
Not youthful sweet hopes
That never grow stale;
The beautiful dream ships
That sailed far away
To sweet fairy islands
Can never decay.

Their mem'ry we cherish,
They never grow old,
Our most precious treasures,
They cannot be sold!
In sweet twilight's evening
We view them afar,
They're still onward sailing,
Their haven a star.

We all have our dreams, Will,
We're dreaming today;
We still send out hope ships,
Although we are gray.
I'm glad yours are clean, Will,
Though washed by your tears,
For such a pure chastening
Rewards future years.

Don't ask me to buy, Will,
Although sold at cost;
They're all last spring's garments,
And will not stand frost.
Just store them away, Will,
In memory's urn;
Some bright sweet spring morning
The ships may return.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

O, I'M ALWAYS DREAMING

O, I'm always dreaming something
That in visions seem sublime,
And I fain would give expression
Of its beauty in sweet rhyme.

Like the blossoms of a Maypop
On its tender vine of green—
Is a beauty that the artist
Cannot paint upon his screen—
So this misty phantom beauty
That is ever in my mind—
Always vanishes the moment,
As I seek the words to find.

Yet I'm dreaming, ever dreaming,
As the hours speed on the way;
All my thoughts with beauty teeming,
Like a clustered rose bouquet;
And the beauty of my vision
That I can't describe to you,
Is more lovely than a garden
Of wild flowers freshed with dew.

For sweet crystal streams of water,
Flashing sparkling tints of gold,
Flows amidst the dreamy vision
As its beauty doth unfold;
And I just keep on a dreaming
As I gaze upon the scene,
While my thoughts go drifting upward,
With a soul calm and serene.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

O, I fain would give expression,
But my language fails complete;
For my dreams are all of heaven,
And no words are fit or mete.

MORNING GLORIES

Morning glories, white and blue,
Morning glories, fresh with dew,
Greeting me each breaking dawn,
On the porch and on the lawn;
Tender as the moon's soft rays,
How you fill me with amaze,
As each morn you show your head,
Yet the night before seemed dead!

Dew drop diamonds every morn,
On each blossom doth adorn,
Yet e'er comes the noonday's sun,
Seemeth each one's race is run;
Like the butterfly on wing,
Only summer time doth sing,
And when comes cold winter drear,
All at once doth disappear—
So each glory fades away,
E'er the close of one short day;
Yet each morning gives new birth,
Full of lovely beauty's worth.

Tender seems life's brittle thread:
Like a bubble overhead—
Melting in the liquid air—
Frames decay, life lives elsewhere:
Though in darkness we now grope,
Yet immortal is our hope,

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

For each heart doth earnest yearn—
And though dim—new life discern:
Does not all of nature sing
A new song each coming spring?
Yet the autumn winds do sigh,
As the leaves drop off and die.

As the seasons come and go,
Life from death just seems to flow;
And though once all seemed decay,
New birth springs from beds of clay:
Why should we be prone to weep,
When we lay us down to sleep?
Does not nature teach us all,
Life springs up where seeds do fall?
Frames are but the outer shell,
Where immortal life doth dwell!
When immortal leaves the frame—
Mother Earth enforces claim.
Life itself cannot decay—
Does not melt or waste away—
Then may we not all surmise,
That in glory we shall rise?

Though this mystery profound,
Every mortal doth astound,
Still, though dimly, we can see
Traces of divinity;
For our teachers, earth and skies,
Tell us nothing ever dies:
And though future is not clear,
Nature proves this truth each year.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Then like morning glories blue,
Ever springing up anew,
Let us hope in paradise,
That our bodies shall arise.

I SAW MY HEART

I saw my heart floating
In a turbulent stream,
All helplessly drifting
'Midst danger supreme.
Just buffeted onward
'Midst rotting decay,
Of sin's so-called pleasure,
That led it astray.

'Twas throbbing with anguish,
And struggling in vain
To leave the surroundings,
Its freedom to gain:
But ever was clinging
The sins of the past,
And siren voice, singing,
Would still hold it fast.

Just calling and calling,
Oh, sin tasted sweet!
And though 'twas appalling,
It could not retreat.
It soon was exhausted,
Could struggle no more—
*Then like a corpse, frosted,
It drifted to shore.*

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Its beauty had faded,
And withered and seared—
It lay on the beach there—
All stained and besmeared.
I gazed on it sadly
And knelt down to pray—
That God in His goodness
Would cleanse it the day.

The scars are still seaming,
But beauty is there;
For God's love, redeeming,
Has mended with care;
And now though 'tis throbbing,
'Tis gratitude's beat,
For all of its service,
Is laid at God's feet.

A LITTLE NEGRO GIRL

A little negro baby girl—
As happy as could be—
Was playing 'round a cabin door
In dear old Tennessee;
The cotton blossoms were in bloom—
Her mammy you could see,
With hoe in hand in nearby field,
Was toiling like a bee.

And as she toiled, she sang a song
That floated on the breeze;
A song that had a sad refrain,
And yet withal did please.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

She sang about her baby child—
Though born of low degree—
And asked that God would on it smile,
Though a black child was she.

She made the words up as she sang—
No rhetoric was there—
But somehow something made you feel,
Her heart was in the air.
At times her voice seemed to exult,
And soared in lofty flight;
And then sank back to lowest key—
A wailing note of fright.

Ever, anon, she looked about
To see if all was well;
Again returning to her toil,
That strange sad song would swell.
She sang about immortal things,
When souls would take their flight;
And prophesied that pleasing thought—
Her baby would be white.

Though now its face was ebon black,
In heav'n 'twould be like snow:
The thought of it filled her with joy,
And caused her face to glow.
A wailing sound broke on the ear—
The mother fiercely sprung—
A rattlesnake, all coiled up there—
Her little babe had stung!

Then anguish broke in torrent wild—
In notes of deep despair—
Oh, help me Lord, oh, spare my child—
Though black, to me she's fair!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I'll ne'er again ask Thee, dear Lord,
To change the leopard's spot;
I'll never more again complain—
Be contented with my lot!

Oh, give me back my baby girl,
To me from heaven sent—
I'm sorry for my wicked thoughts—
Dear Lord, I now repent.
I know in wisdom Thou'st seen fit
To make the flowers fair;
Yet close beside those lovely things,
Thou'st planted weeds with care:

With Thee, all things are beautiful—
The low as well as high—
And even one poor sparrow's fall
Doth not escape Thine eye—
Then do forgive my wicked thoughts,
And let my baby live,
I'll work and do what seemeth best—
My life to Thee I'll give.

* * * * *

A little negro baby girl—
As happy as can be—
Still plays about a cabin door,
In dear old Tennessee;
Her mammy in the field close by,
Is toiling with a hoe;
Her happy song is full of praise,
Her face is all aglow.

The song that floats upon the breeze,
In volume full and free—
Bespeaks a soul of happiness—
And full of jubilee.
A lesson she has learned, my friend—
'Twould profit you and me—
To be contented with our lot—
Whatever it might be.

THE MASTER OF OUR LODGE

Our Master was a grand old man
Whom brethren did revere;
He often lectured on the theme
They loved so much to hear;
His earnest voice was low and sweet,
And full of dignity;
His hair was white, his form was bent
With age, as all could see.

But silence reigned when he began,
And all, attention gave;
They loved that white-haired, aged man,
A-nearing to the grave.
It was a sight to see them all
Draw close about the east,
As if in answer to a call—
Come now, enjoy the feast.

They hung upon each word he spoke,
From first unto the end,
And watched the glistening tears that broke,
As prayers would ascend.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Of all the Masters I have seen,
He was the best of all;
In language he was very clean,
And prompt to duty's call.

Long years have passed since he was here,
But still in memory—
The brethren hold his name most dear—
"Old Brother Gregory."
And silent tears roll down the face
Of many in our hall,
As they glance at the honored place—
His picture on the wall.

When at the last we're called to die,
And be, dear Lord, with Thee,
May the first face that we espy—
"Be dear old Gregory."

SEVEN STAGES OF LIFE

I am an infant at the breast,
And in my mother's arm I rest;
I'm free from thought and every care,
And each one thinks I'm wondrous fair.
My breath is sweet from mother's milk,
My skin's as soft as velvet silk.
They sprinkle me with sweet perfume,
And bank with flowers all my room.
They use pink powder on my skin,
From tip of toe to dimpled chin.
They sleep me on the softest bed,
And every comfort o'er me spread.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

EIGHTEEN MONTHS OLD

From mother's breast they're weaning me,
And I'm unhappy as can be;
I'm dry and thirsty all day long,
And cry because I think it's wrong.
They've taken from me mother's breast,
And I can neither sleep or rest;
My heart is sick with baby grief,
And nothing else will give relief.
I beg and plead just to partake
A draught or two, my thirst to slake.
Close to my mother's side I creep,
And each refusal makes me weep.

THREE YEARS OLD

I'm dad and mamma's little man,
And love them both as much as can;
But still I'm 'fraid when it comes night,
'Cause ghosts come then and fill with fright.
But dad says, little man be brave—
A dead man can't come from his grave—
But Jane told me that it was true—
And somehow, I believe it, too.
At any rate, when left alone,
I think I hear an awful groan,
And cover up my head real tight,
To hide the dreadful thing from sight.

THIRTEEN YEARS OLD

I'm thirteen years of age today—
I hate old school, but love to play.
The sun is hot, the water's cool,
'Tis hard to have to stay in school:
The 'rithmetic and grammar, too,
Is hard to learn and makes me blue.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I cannot see the use of it,
And both of them I'd like to quit.
I wish they'd let me hunt and swim,
And fish for perch and trout, and brim—
I'm sure it would be more to me,
Than learning this old rule of three.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS OLD

My education's now complete,
And with the world I must compete;
But still new lessons I must learn,
While striving a support to earn.
'Tis just another kind of school,
But still more rigid is its rule;
For here you must prove merit's worth,
Or soon you'll seek another berth.
No favors shown to any one,
For each must prove his work well done;
For though the mill may grind real slow,
Yet in the end, results will show.

FIFTY YEARS OLD

I've reached the zenith of my life,
Still struggling with this worldly strife;
Some harvests I have laid in store,
But still I wish to gather more.
It seems there is no time to rest,
The tide now seems just at its crest;
Ambition grips me in its vice,
And greater wealth doth me entice.
I sometimes think, at eventide,
While wife is sitting by my side,
I'd like to quit all business strife,
And take my ease the rest of life.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

SEVENTY YEARS OLD

I'm now full three score years and ten,
And scarce can write for trembling pen;
It seemeth now in looking back,
I've made mistakes in every track.
I've gained in this world, much of wealth—
At cost of strength and loss of health;
I cannot take this wealth with me,
Across the dark immortal sea!
I've reached the evening of my life,
And soon must leave this mortal strife:
The wealth I've gained seems now, but dross—
Compared in value with the loss.

SAD AND WEARY

O, I feel so sad and weary,
That I fain would be at rest;
All the world seems dark and dreary—
Dismal clouds are in the west.
Autumn winds are sadly sighing,
Grief seems mingled with their tone;
Blossoms and blossoms all are dying,
Leafless trees are left, alone.

Over hills and vales I wander,
Seeking for the spring of youth—
Pro and con, both here and yonder—
Like a hermit seeking truth.
Slowly creeping, sadly weeping—
Disappointments bend the frame;
Tares and thistles for the reaping—
Burns the heart with mem'ry's flame.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Youth is bright at early morning,
Age seems withered and forlorn—
With a frosty head adorning—
For lost youth doth ever mourn.
Ah! my youth is gone forever—
It will ne'er return again—
Ardent hopes, age doth disever—
Fills with retrospective pain.

Now my lamps with cloudy vision
Strive to pierce the foggy morn,
And I bow with sad submission,
As I'm scratched and torn by thorn.
Struggling up the rugged hillside
Of life's journey day by day—
Often swept by the old mill tide
Of the Gods, I lose my way.

Soon I'll stretch me by the wayside,
Ne'er again to struggle more—
And sail o'er immortal life's tide,
To an unknown mystic shore.

TO LUDIE H.

The best and dearest friend I knew,
Was a poor boy with eyes of blue,
Who had not much of this world's store,
And cared but little to get more.

Though weighted down with toil and care,
He kept his heart free from despair,
And labored faithful to the end,
Until God called him to ascend.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

His open face and eyes of blue,
Bespoke a nature good and true;
And when a smile lit up his face,
A loving sweetness you could trace.

His face comes to me every day,
Although his form's beneath the clay:
His early friendship was a joy,
With naught to tarnish or annoy.

As years pass swiftly in their flight,
And friends like him pass into night,
My heart is filled with lonesome pain,
And longs to see each face again.

We meet and mingle here on earth—
Find many men of real true worth—
But never can the spirit blend
With them, like with a boyhood friend.

Now, oft in quiet solitude,
I sit me down and muse, and brood,
And think of him, my boyhood friend—
While anguished grief my soul doth rend.

I miss him as the years go by,
And often my poor heart doth sigh
For just one glance of his dear face,
Which in my heart finds an embrace.

I trust some day we'll meet again,
In that sweet land where God doth reign;
Where there's no grief, no toil, no care,
But joy supreme is always there.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

MAID OF EARLE

Lovely maid of Earle, incline;
Let thy rosy lips touch mine;
Though my soul should anguished be,
Its unhappiness would flee.

Let my longing heart be pressed
Closely, to thy heaving breast;
All its fevered throbbing pain,
Would its normal then regain.

And if happen I should chance,
Just to catch a fleeting glance
Of two lovely heaps of snow,
It would make my joy o'erflow.

For I long to pillow there—
On those snow white heaps, so fair,
This poor aching head of mine—
There forever, to recline.

Oh, the joy, exquisite bliss,
At the very thought of this!
Just to have my head lie there,
Would expel all worldly care.

BRETHREN OF THE THREE DEGREES

Dear brethren of the three degrees,
I think of you when on my knees,
And pray that God may bless you in
Those paths of virtue, free from sin.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I think of you when all is still
At night, and sitting near the mill
Close by, I drop a tear and sigh
For Auld Lang Syne, the days gone by.

Dear Master, and you brethren, too—
I know you to be good and true—
I know your hearts are full of love,
And hope to meet you all above.
I know the zeal that doth inspire
Your hearts with love, 'twas with such fire,
The noble Pike, wrought out his work,
Oh, never from your duty shirk;
But ever onward press, look up,
The glorious prize—that golden cup—
“The oil of joy”, shall be your share
In that celestial land so fair—
Where all good Masons hope at last
To rest themselves; forget the past
Troubles and cares of life, press on,
Night fades away; bright breaks the dawn.

Now let us 'round this altar stand,
And grasp each other by the hand;
Eternal friendship we have sworn—
Yet oft times I have felt forlorn—
When fickle fortune played me wrong,
And friends seemed false and distant swung
Their recognition; their cold clasp
Soul-less, like the sting of an asp!

Tonight my heart is full of love;
Its inspiration's from above;
Every thought to God it raises,
Adoration, thanks and praises.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

God bless you, brothers, one and all;
We meet here equal, *great and small*;
My heart is warm, though faults are grave;
Your love, your love is all I crave.

ON DEATH OF MRS. H.

See her lying there so pale—
Tiny little form so frail—
Beautiful in death so white—
Sleeping her last sleep tonight?
Ah, grim death with his keen knife,
Has cut off her gentle life;
Gone's the spirit from the clay—
Gone to heaven, there to stay.

Soon, ah, soon, her body must
Be consigned unto the dust;
Soon a little mound of green,
In the graveyard, will be seen;
And sad tears will water there—
Many flowers sweet and fair;
Then on marble stone we'll trace—
Her dear name to mark the place;

And as that spot will be dear,
Oft you'll find us gathered near,
Just to sit and silent muse—
With her spirit, to infuse:
And at last when ends earth's tide,
We'll be laid close by her side,
There to slumber in God's love,
'Til He calls us home above.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

WE SELDOM WED

'Tis often said we seldom wed,
The sweetheart of our youth;
And then 'tis said that tears are shed
Because of this sad truth.

The girl you knew with eyes of blue,
That caused your heart to beat;
Seemed good and true as up you grew,
And none seemed quite so sweet.

Some other maid, the devil played
With roguish, drooping eye;
The first sweet maid, all proud and staid
Then coldly passed you by.

In after years with bitter tears,
In both your hearts a sigh;
Wedlock affairs with loveless cares,
Just made a darkened sky.

THE OLD EXCUSE: AT LODGE LAST NIGHT

Dear wife, I was at lodge last night—
“The tipsy rascal said,”
And there received such wondrous light,
I almost lost my head.
The Master, he was at his best,
Was full of earnest zeal;
The candidate was sure impressed—
To him it was most real.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The mystic rite was carried through
With solemn air and mien;
The pearly gates were ope'd to view,
But devils flit between.
He who was taking the degree,
Was in an awful fright—
Was trembling in each joint and knee—
And ready for a flight.

His hair was standing on its end—
His eyes—oh, 'twas a sight—
He was so scared he could not bend
His knees to pray last night.
I felt so sorry for old Ben—
He is my friend, you know—
And so I stayed all night, and then,
I helped him home to go.

As thus the rascal slyly spoke,
And thought that all was well—
His wife upon him quickly broke
A stick, and, sad to tell—
A new degree conferred on him
With all her might and main.
She pummelled him with angry vim,
His pleadings were in vain.

She scratched his face and pulled his hair,
She threw him on the floor—
Until in desperate despair—
He said, I'll go no more.
Henceforth I'll stay at home with thee—
I'll do what'er you say—
I'll be real good as you shall see,
Strike me no more, I pray.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

For full three weeks he lay in bed,
He was so awful sore;
And as he laid there often said—
My dear, I'll go no more.
Now all you Masons, for your lives,
Don't tell such foolish lies;
You cannot pass it on your wives,
For they are getting wise.

A TRIAL

WRITTEN THE YEAR THAT THE PULLMAN
SHOPS WERE CLOSED, AND COXEY'S ARMY
WAS MARCHING TO WASHINGTON, D. C.

The large court house was crowded;
There was scarcely standing room;
The pris'ner stood with clouded
Face, waiting to hear his doom.
A girl stood by him sadly,
With a look so wan and lone—
The judge's heart strings madly
Throbbled, to keep suppressed a groan.

Pris'ner! You're charged with stealing;
Have you anything to say—
Why this court in its ruling,
Should not pass sentence today?
The jury's found you guilty,
And the goods were on you found;
I am inclined to pity
You, if there's excusive ground.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Your Honor, said the pris'ner,
Fifteen years ago, this day,
I married Mary Miller;
"She died the twelfth of May."
She left me this one jewel—
The only fruit of our love—
Said, Charley, don't be cruel
To her, then, meet me above.

I tried to do my duty—
Worked with all my strength, my aim—
To keep my daughter Juty,
From a life of sin and shame.
The Pullman shops were shut down,
And we were put out of room;
We tramped miles all over town—
With hearts bowed down with gloom.

Poor Juty, faint with starving,
Said, *Father, I—can—not—go—*
An—oth—er step; I'm dy—ing!
Judge! I knew not what to do!
To see my darling starving
With plenty to eat in sight!
Judge! Do you call it stealing?
Yes, I took the bread that night.

* * * * *

*A loud sound of sobbing, broke
Upon the listening ears;
A girl's voice, grief-broken, spoke
Of troubles, sorrows and cares.*

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Oh, Judge, forgive my father,
To save me he did this deed;
Judge, have you got a daughter?
Then think of the dreadful need!

My father's not a thief, sir,
He always worked when he could;
Was kind to me, his daughter,
Was a father true and good.
And, Judge, when hard times came on,
When he thought I was asleep,
I've seen him kneeling upon
The floor, and there sadly weep.

I know that it was wrong, sir,
But think of our sore distress;
'Twas either that or death, sir—
The angels will surely bless!
As she stopped speaking, sobbing
Could be heard on every side;
Some on the floor were kneeling—
Others, with loud voices cried.

* * * * *

*The Judge, with voice quite broken,
Said, this sentence I suspend;
Pris'ner, the door is open—
And your conduct I commend.*

* * * * *

They crowded 'round the pris'ner,
Audience, jury, Judge and all;
They raised him on their shoulder,
And carried him in the hall.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

They loaded him with kindness
As they crowded 'round that day—
They made up, in their gladness—
Funds to help him on the way.

* * * * *

*We learn from this, my countrymen,
How grasping wealth, combined,
Can force poor laboring men—
In poverty's chains confined—
To steal or starve, Ah, awful shame
That such should be their fate;
Our country's lost its honored fame—
Awake! e'er 'tis too late!
Let not the tyrant hand of wealth
Cause you to live by stealth;
Your children cry with gasping breath!
And shall they starve to death?
You have the power in your hand,
If you will firmly stand;
You have the right which gives you might;
Together pull and fight:
Let tyrants feel the mighty strength—
All o'er this broad land's length,
Of honest laws to break the chains
Of all ill-gotten gains.*

HUMMING BIRDS

On my front porch there came in quest
Two humming birds to build a nest;
And all the time that I could see,
They were as busy as could be.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

When finished was each twig and leaf,
It seemed to give one bird relief;
She sat upon the tiny nest,
And settled down as if to rest.
The other bird with slender beak,
Amongst the flowers seemed to peek;
He'd run his beak up in their cup,
And sweetest nectar from them sup.
A buzzing sound from him was heard,
While lightning wings the zephyrs stirred.
His dazzling beauty was a sight—
No words of mine describes aright.
He'd poise himself upon the air—
So cute and sweet, and debonair—
That in your heart he found a place,
As here and there he'd swiftly race;
For every movement, so demure,
Was such as would your heart allure,
And like a maiden, to incite,
His glance just filled you with delight.

The other bird, with sedate way,
Just sat upon the nest all day;
And then, although you say absurd!
Quite soon appeared another bird.
Although a tiny little mite,
I gazed upon it with delight;
The mother watched with tender care,
The little nestling lying there.
She nestled it beneath her wing—
Although I never heard her sing—
And silent sat as days passed by,
Until the little thing could fly.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

One day I went to peep again,
And started back with grief and pain;
The little nest was empty, bare,
And filled my heart with sad despair.
The leaves were gone, the blooms in blight,
The little birds had taken flight.
I missed them as the days passed by,
And often for them I would sigh;
But when old winter passed away,
The little birds came back to lay.
One morn when spring was in the air,
Again I found them nesting there.

MY OLD HOME IN THE COUNTRY

Some years ago when I abode,
In an old home close by the road,
I loved to sit beneath the trees,
And listen to the birds and bees.
The house, old fashioned in its style—
For comfort would a king beguile;
Its broad front porch, with vines of green,
Suggested life, calm and serene.

Beneath a massive, grand old oak,
I used to love to sit and smoke—
While birds o'erhead would sit and sing,
As if life was eternal spring.
My thoughts would often drift along—
With the music of a bird's sweet song;
And gently fanned by zephyrs breeze—
I'd silent nod in rhythmic ease.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The tangled thicket 'cross the road—
Where many little creatures 'bode—
Had many blossoms hidden there,
To nature lovers, ever fair.
The pine trees with unchanging green—
In distant view enhanced the scene.
The winding road, lined with green fern,
Made beautiful each twist and turn.

A meadow out before you spread,
Where many daisies showed their head;
While here and there persimmon trees—
With golden leaves swayed to the breeze.
A splashing, babbling little brook,
Led downward to a lovely nook,
And just beyond, wild flowers rare,
Grew in profusion everywhere.

Near my bed window stood a tree,
Where song birds mated full of glee;
And often when to bed I'd creep,
Their soft sweet notes lulled me to sleep.
My mem'ry turns to one sweet night,
When pale moon rays were shining bright;
I thought I heard an angel sing—
While hovering o'erhead on the wing.

My window opened to the tree,
Where birds had mated full of glee,
And blessed with birdlike fruits of love—
Just sang their praise to God above.
The wonder filled me with amaze,
And I awoke in dreamy daze;
A mocking bird at break of day,
Was caroling a soft sweet lay.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

COME, LITTLE MAID

Come, little maid,
Come tell me true—
Do you love me?
Say that you do!
Smile on me sweetly,
Don't be shy,
Oh, little maid,
For you I'd die!

Oh, how I love you,
Little maid!
Why do you tease me,
Naughty jade?
Oh, little maid,
Don't be so cold,
List' to the sweetest
Story told.

Take this rose, dear,
Place in your hair;
Oh, little maid,
You are so fair!
Place thy dear
Little hand in mine,
And say, sweetheart,
I will be thine.

Oh, little maid,
Please name the day—
When with me
You will go away!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Go with me
To remain for life,
And be my darling
Little wife.

SMILE

'Tis true a smile begets a smile,
Likewise a frown, a frown;
Reciprocating all the while
With joy, you'll sorrow drown.

Quite oft regret will o'er us steal
For angry words of past,
And old remorse then makes us feel
A pain that oft doth last.

In this old world the span of life
Is very short indeed;
If you'll avoid all hate and strife,
You'll have friends when in need.

No word of kindness spoken yet,
Has ever been in vain;
And e'en of those you've but once met—
Quite oft a friend you'll gain.

A smile will beautify the face,
And keep you young and fair;
In memory's heart you'll have a place,
And find sweet welcome there.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

AN ANSWER TO A POEM WRITTEN BY MISS
S. OF OREGON. POEM WAS ENTITLED, "IF"

In answer to your soldier's "If"—
Excuse the rhymes if they seem stiff,
For I endorse the sentiment,
And this last war, my heart has rent.

War, even at its very best,
Is not at all a welcome guest;
'Tis caused by greed and lust for power,
And robs us of young manhood's flower.

But still, a nation has to fight
Sometimes, to keep the others right;
E'en though it brings a bitter tear,
And fills some poor heart with despair;
To make the world a better place
For men, in peace, to run their race—
That all in safety might pursue
Their life on earth, with happy view.

The mothers suffer most of all,
When to their country's urgent call
Their sons enlist, and march away,
Perhaps to sleep in foreign clay;
But after all this may be best,
If, to the world, both peace and rest
Should be the outcome of this war,
And to all others, be a bar:

But few are perfect here on earth—
But few are fit for heaven's worth—
Though some may shout, "EXCELSIOR"!—
They miss the mark, fall short by far.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

On earth, we are but simple men,
Born full of faults, "*of this you ken*"?
Your standard's high, we don't deny,
But reaches far beyond the sky.

We can obey our country's call;
And for the right, give e'en our all
Without applause, or winning fame,
Or selfish thought, and without blame!
And we can even gladly die—
The shadows of grim death defy—
If only through our dying tear,
We see 'twas for some one we held dear!

But then, the other things you ask!
Alas! you put us to a task
That even angels could not do;
And that much we agree with you.

THOU SHALT HAVE FREEDOM, ALL

Dark lowering clouds spread over the world!
Might, not right's banner, was to be unfurled;
Men's hearts were faint, filled with sickening fear—
Sought vain to escape groping here and there.

A beast full of lustful greed and power
Had stretched his claws, *and dark was the hour!*

The lustful beast's mammoth form did tower
With greedy appetite, to devour
The nation's best, their young manhood's power;
And freedom's cause seemed lost that self same hour!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

More than fearful seemed the cost—
And strong men faintly whispered, "*All is lost!*"

Those mighty hordes whose tramps did shake the earth,
With wanton rape and frightful things gave birth;
Then woman's fearful scream! many a maid
On knees, implored our country's aid:

The cry was heard! and soon a mighty throng—
The best of our young manhood, good and strong—
Was on the way to check the frightful wrong:

Through perils—crossed the mighty deep—
And from old France, those mighty hordes did sweep!
Nor stopped they there, but to his knees they brought—
And caused the beast, "unwelcome guest", unsought—
To flee his country with a lesson taught!

Then as the world lay bleeding at our feet—
With millions even without food to eat—
A mighty fleet of merchant ships were sent,
And billions for their sustenance was spent.

Nor stopped we there! to all small nations call—
Our Wilson said, thou shalt have freedom, all.

NOBODY CALLS

I'm lonely each day,
For nobody calls;
I'm left all alone
To gaze on the walls;
Wherever I go
I'm met with a stare—
Of freezing disdain,
That fills with despair.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Each day as I strive
Temptations to down,
And live a clean life
To merit a crown,
I'm passed with an air
Of haughty disdain—
That fills my poor heart
With sorrow and pain.

Although in back seats
Where church pews are free—
That pew, all alone,
Is left to poor me;
And although I pray—
I pray but in vain—
For each of them fear
The touch of my stain.

In anguish of soul
I pray the dear God—
To help me bear all,
And tender the rod;
To open the eye
And tender some heart—
To take me within,
And some love impart.

I know I'm not good—
Am stained with my sin—
But doing my best
Sweet heaven to win.
But oh, it is weary
To struggle alone,
*When you ask for bread—
They give you a stone!*

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

More kindness was shown
When steeped in my sin,
I went the full round
In abandonment's spin;
For sometimes I found
A kind hearted man—
Who opened his heart
To the poor courtesan.

Sometimes in my room
I sat with a friend,
Without sinful thought—
But mem'ry would rend—
When mother's sweet face—
Like a dim misty dream,
Flashed into my view
With a transient gleam:

Ah! then would I think
With a sinking despair,
Of sweet childhood days—
So free from all care!
To kill old remorse
I'd up with a bound—
Enter the ball room,
And dance gaily around.

I'd empty the glass
'Til my pulse was aflame,
And expose all my charms
To advertise shame:
E'en there I could find
A transient relief
To drown old remorse,
For a few moments brief!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Excitement was there,
Relieving the mind
Of sin's dark conscience,
To temper the wind!
And joy of its kind
To make you forget—
For in the mad whirl,
You thought no regret.

But here, in my room,
I sit all alone,
With nothing to do
But think and bemoan.
Not one of my sex
With friendly voice near,
To speak a good word
Of comfort and cheer.

The grave of my past
Is in shallow ground,
For often the corpse
Of that past is found;
Then, gathered around
The poor rotting frame,
My sex seem to joy
In flaunting my shame.

Like some sweet morsel
The palate enjoys—
“Of things replete,
The tongue never cloy”
They dig up my past
And toss it about—
In glorious joy,
They sing and they shout!

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Like a pharisee
Born in his conceit,
They can't comprehend
Repentance complete;
The publican prayed,
And prayed not in vain—
That God would forgive,
And cleanse him from stain.

But nevertheless,
Forgetful of this—
They gather their skirts
And scornfully hiss,
Forgetting perhaps—
In their own conceit—
Their brothers were not,
Like them, so discreet.

They say of the men,
They must have their fling—
That nothing they do
Will leave lasting sting;
That call of the wild
To ardent youth's fire—
In after years make
Men the maids all admire.

They say of those men—
You will always find—
To reforming girls,
A friend true and kind;
But many I knew
In the days of old sin,
Now speak to their wives
With grim discipline.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Forbidding a word
Wherever they meet—
To reforming girls,
In church or in street.
Forgetting themselves
The life of the past—
No confidence in
The once poor outcast.

'Tis true there are some
Whose faces reveal
A heart full of love—
That ever doth feel
For poor fallen girls;
For, ah, they have seen
The life they once led
Behind the dark screen:

And ever they speak
A word of sweet cheer
To help them along—
In language sincere;
And all of the past
In their mind is erased—
To help the poor girl
To live a life chaste.

*Now give me your ear,
Attention, my friend!
Let self righteousness
For once condescend!
Let curtains be raised
And closets unlocked,
And skeletons walk
While priests are unfrocked!*

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

*Let men in front pews
And women in choirs,
Call on the good Lord,
To escape Sodom's fires!
Uncover yourselves
And let the world see
How ready you are—
For the great jubilee!*

*Let him throw the stone
Who's now free from sin!
Come quick—get ready—
Say! who will begin?
What! Ha! You are pale!
Your sin's found you out!
The sight before men,
Has put you to rout.*

*What! e'en before men
You tremble with dread?
What chance have you then
Before God overhead?
What now of the girl
Who tries to reform?
Who stands all alone
Amidst the world's storm?*

*Will she before God
Stand there all alone—
While you and your kind
Pass on to the throne?
Oh, power above!
Remove from the eye
The beam that makes each,
Their acts justify.*

* * * * *

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

I live in a house as brittle as glass,
And will not tramp down a poor fallen lass;
I'll give her a smile and stretch out my hand,
And help her out of the sinking sand.

I ANSWER NOT

I answer not those cold and distant men
Who have no time to read a dreamer's pen—
Who concentrate their narrow minds each day
On gaining wealth, regardless of the way—
I merely bow and smile, and say, good-day:

I wonder, should the song birds fly away,
And all the flowers wither and decay,
And babbling brooklet waters stagnant lie,
And breezes through the tree tops cease to sigh,
I wonder, then, if in their hearts they'd say—
Oh, God! Dear God! Oh, send them back, I pray?

If they but knew the store of beauty's wealth,
Which cannot, like their gains, be got by stealth—
The fairies whisper in the poet's ear,
All greed and selfishness would disappear.

I merely bow and smile, and go my way
And tune my harp, and sing new songs each day—
And in the sunshine of new beauties bask,
And leave them bending o'er their greedy task.

Not all are cold and selfish that I meet,
Some say, God bless you, brother, have a seat—
And grasping by the hand with smiling way—
All o'er their face, soul's beauty doth display.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

The sweetness of my heart goes out to them
All sparkling with love's royal diadem;
And though they do not always buy my wares—
Yet all the day seems free from earthly cares.

God bless the noble hearted ones we meet—
Whose clasp—be it in palace or in street—
All snobbishness and arrogance doth ban,
And makes us feel the brotherhood of man!

I merely bow and smile, and go my way,
And leave those cold and selfish ones, who say,
"I have no time to read a dreamer's pen",
And seek until I find more kindly men.

OF HOMELY THINGS I SING

Dear Burns, like thee, of homely things I sing—
Those humble scenes that to the poor, bring
A touch of joy that lightens toil and care,
And gives them just a little pleasure here.

The poor have many burdens hard to bear—
So hard, indeed, that often in despair
They lose all hope, and thus cast down, they sigh—
And for relief, so sadly moan and cry.

Ah! many wrongs they have imposed on them—
That all the world, indignant, should condemn:
Well knew our Savior when on earth He said
That those—who to the manor born and bred—
Descendants from a boasted pedigree—

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

Would scarce be able heaven's gate to see;
For well He knew the power money gave—
To gratify the passions of a knave!
That wealthy ones in idle pleasure bent,
Was oft the cause of many a poor heart's rent.

*Should we the sins of wealthy ones unfold,
And give the world a glance within the mold—
To view the thoughts in most of them that dwell—
'Twould take a regiment, the crowd to quell.*

Ah! wearily the mother, bent with toil,
Doth pray, her baby no one shall despoil;
For well she knows that when from home away,
Some fiend, her daughter's honor may betray;
For well she knows, these dirty imps of hell,
Have power here on earth to buy and sell!

Her heart's deep bitterness she can't control,
And anguish oft doth wring her very soul;
Yet relief is felt in her heaving sighs,
For to cure each pain, nature's law applies.

*Of course, dear Burns, in candor I should add—
That many of the wealthy ones are not bad;
But then they are so pitifully few—
We lose sight of them in the larger view.*

So I will sing to them sweet homely songs—
Perhaps in listening, they'll forget their wrongs—
And joining in the chorus full and free—
Will make the welkin ring with jubilee;
Then gathered with their loved ones 'round the fire,
In happy mood, accompany the lyre

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

With songs of mine; and as full and free—
Their happy voices swell with melody—
A moment then—their heart's all free from care—
A smile may come, and wrinkles disappear;
And e'en their bent forms may straighten up
With joy, as they forget the bitter cup.

*Can a reward there be greater than this—
Than fill a poor and lowly heart with bliss?
To see such souls all full of gratitude—
To me, would be a taste of heaven's food.*

But, ah! too oft we sing for great one's ears—
Forgetful of these poor one's griefs and tears—
And puffed with pride and flattering deceit—
We tune the harp strings and sing with conceit.

Then let me sing one song that will atone
And compensate for sins that I have sown:
One song of melody to reach each heart
With a balm of Gilead to impart;
One song that may tender to lighten the load
Of poor weary mortals on this life's road.

SONGS FROM THE OZARKS

FINIS

May beauty from my soil spring up,
Where e'er I may repose;
The lily and the buttercup—
And here and there a rose;
Wild flowers that blow in the spring,
To feed the busy bees;
And may the birds come there and sing,
In the top of swaying trees.

In after years when I shall sleep
Beneath a mound of green,
And nature's blooms o'er me shall creep,
Enhancing all the scene—
Should you pass by my melting frame,
And pluck some beauty rare,
Remember, from my soil it came—
"Sprung from me, lying there."

J. M. HICKMAN.





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